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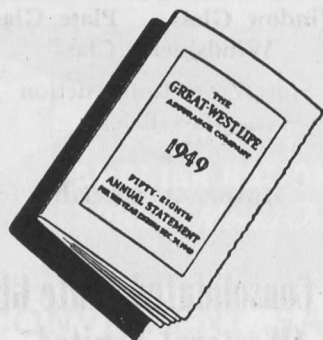
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# The Icelandic Canadian

Vol. 8

Winnipeg, Man., Spring 1950

No. 3

## *The Chair of Icelandic Language and Literature*

During the past year the Founders' committee has been very successful in raising funds for the establishment of a Chair of Icelandic Language and Literature in The University of Manitoba. At the present time \$154,000.00 have been subscribed of which there is on deposit in the University the sum of \$132,696.08.

On February 16, 1950, the committee felt that the time had arrived to give every person of Icelandic extraction an opportunity to participate regardless of the amount of his contribution. Since the committee was charged with raising funds in units of one thousand dollars or more, this plan was adhered to but was modified into a working plan that has been found convenient in the raising of funds from (1) individuals, (2) organizations, (3) individuals who wish to establish a founder and (4) all others.

1. Individual founders — The response that the committee has had from individuals interested in this project is well known and has been a source of great gratification to the committee. Without this enthusiastic response, the project was doomed to failure.

2. Organization founders — Every one of the five sponsoring organizations have become founders or are in the process of becoming so. In addition to this, there are many other groups who will wish to associate them-

selves with this project by becoming founders.

3. Recognition founders — It is in this group that honor can be extended to Icelanders, both living and deceased, who have been leaders in their community, who have been pioneers in many walks of life and indeed to anyone whom friends and relatives wish to honor. Many groups of Recognition founders have accomplished their objective, others are well on the way to reaching it and many plan to begin in the near future.

4. Group founders — The committee felt that in this category all individuals who want to participate in the project could do so without deviating from the principle, which was established three years ago, of appealing only to founders or founder units. The committee, well aware of the fact that they were charged with the duty of raising funds in amounts of one thousand dollars or more, have adopted this method in order to adhere to these instructions. The committee is looking for volunteers who will not only make donations themselves but will also agree to take charge of collections in their districts. Receipt Books have been prepared for the purpose and will be mailed on request.

Since the University has undertaken to take steps to establish the Chair when \$150,000.00 has been reached the committee is of the opinion that this

objective will be reached this year and the final sum of \$200,000.00 a year or so later. Their optimism is not without foundation because of the generous response from many people of willingness to work and contribute to-

ward the completion of this project.

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Founders.

**P. H. T. Thorlakson, M.D.**

Chairman

**M. Petursson, Secretary**

## *The Founders' Plan*

Founders must contribute one thousand dollars or more in order to qualify. The following are the four categories of Founders:

### **I. Individual Founders**

This comprises all who personally contribute not less than \$1,000.00. All correspondence in regard to payments should be directed to Miss Margret Petursson, 45 Home Street, Winnipeg, the secretary of the Executive Committee of the Founders. Cheques should be made payable to The University of Manitoba and sent to the secretary, or to Mr. F. W. Crawford, Comptroller, The University of Manitoba.

### **II. Organization Founders**

This comprises Icelandic organizations, five of which are already Founders, namely, The Icelandic National League, The Icelandic Canadian Club, The Icelandic Good Templars of Winnipeg, The Jon Sigurdson Chapter, I.O.D.E., and The Icelandic Celebration Committee. It is hoped that other Icelandic organizations will become Founders. All correspondence should be directed to the secretary of an organization or to the person appointed by an organization to take charge of the raising of the required amount of \$1,000.00. All contributions are to be sent to the person so appointed or to the respective secretary.

### **III. Recognition Founders**

This comprises people who collectively contribute \$1,000.00 or more in the name of someone, living or deceased, whom they seek to honor, and in that way establish a Founder to be known as a recognition Founder. Those who thus combine their contributions may select one of their number to take on the responsibility of collecting the required amount. Judge W. J. Lindal, 788 Wolseley Avenue, Winnipeg, is in charge of all arrangements for the collection of contributions in this category, and all communications are to be directed to him.

### **IV. Group Founders**

This comprises any number of individuals who collectively contribute \$1,000.00 or more and in that way establish a Founder to be known as a Group Founder. To distinguish one from another, Group Founders are to be designated in a suitable manner. It is expected that those who thus combine their contributions may select one of their number to take on the responsibility of collecting the required amount. Mr. G. L. Johannson, the Icelandic Consul, is in charge of all arrangements for the collection of contributions in this category, and all communications are to be directed to him.

### **General Provisions**

The final date set for the remittance



of contributions or instalments of contributions is June 17, 1952.

All services are voluntary and no personal expenses or administration expenditures may be taken out of contributions to the Chair.

Approved, February 16, 1950.

The Executive Committee  
of the Founders

P. H. T. Thorlakson, Chairman,

M. Petursson, Secretary

W. J. Lindal, L. A. Sigurdson, G. L.  
Johannson, A. G. Eggertson.

## *London, Broadcasts About the Chair of Icelandic*

The following commentary was given by Henry Provisor, Winnipeg, reporting to *Canadian Chronicle*, and broadcast by the International Service of the BBC, London, England, Mar. 13.

More than \$134,000 has been collected in the campaign to establish the first Canadian-endowed Chair of Icelandic Language and Literature at the University of Manitoba. Enough income is expected to be derived from the final total of \$200,000, to enable the University to teach Icelandic perpetually. When instruction begins, the fund will be administered by the University. Actual collection however, is entirely in the hands of a committee sponsored by various Icelandic organizations in Winnipeg.

The 15,000 Icelanders living in Manitoba, are the largest Icelandic group in the world, outside of Iceland. Another 10,000 are scattered throughout Canada and the United States. It is therefore remarkable that this small minority can collect so large a sum. Right now, money is pouring in from all parts of Canada and the United States, but the bulk is contributed by Manitoba Icelanders.

The value of the move has been lauded by Dr. Gillson, president of the University, who said last week: "The Chair is a real contribution, because it's a true reflection of the Icelanders of this Province. Good Canadians all, they can, by the study and retention of their own language, contribute a richer pattern to Canadian life. The Icelandic

Literature and Language, because of the stories and sagas handed down for hundreds of years, may be regarded as one of the most important contributions to English literature."

While the Icelanders wish to preserve their own culture, this doesn't mean that they are not a valuable asset to Canadian life. Their ready integration here, is well known. They are in all walks of life—farmers, fishermen, merchants. The percentage of Icelanders who have attained positions of honor in the community is relatively high. Many are doctors, lawyers, teachers and judges. Democracy is an old story to them, because the first Icelandic parliament was a solid fact more than 1,000 years ago. The tradition of freedom is a real factor when considering the ease with which they fit into the Canadian scene.

Why should Icelandic be endowed as a Chair at the University? Simply because it is a classical language on a par with Latin and Greek. Because it is still being spoken today; and finally because the rich store of sagas and folktales still in existence, can be translated and read by non-Icelanders. Then too, Icelandic which is akin to the early Anglo-Saxon dialects, is actually part of the English language, and must be considered a root language.



The independent Icelandic invention of prose, that is, the setting down of the huge mass of stories, is one of the most singular phenomena in history. It resulted from the fact that story-telling was a recognized form of entertainment in the isolation of the Icelandic households, in the year 1030.

These stories, exhibiting the best in simple prose writing, hold an honoured place in world literature. It's not difficult to understand then, why this culture, language and literature should be preserved for the benefit of the world.

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## *"Great Oaks From Little Acorns"*

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**Feature in Icelandic Canadian results in Walters' Painting being hung in Glasgow Art Gallery**

When the editor of the Icelandic Canadian asked New York art critic, Russell Horn, to write a feature on Emile Walters and his art, it was, of course, for the purpose of giving the public a glimpse of that fine artist's achievements.

But we could not possibly have calculated the far-reaching results. Not only was the article read by art lovers in other countries but, through it, one of the world's great Art Galleries came into possession of an Emile Walters' painting. It happened thus:

After Mr. Horn had carefully studied the art of Walters, and interviewed the artist, they, having much in common, became better acquainted. Later

Mr. Horn acquired an exceptionally fine work of Walters', 'The Harp of the Valkyries', and having as he says, "a soft side to both Iceland and Scotland", he wanted the Art Gallery of his own city, Glasgow, to have this masterpiece. His gift was accepted by Dr. Honeyman, director of the Glasgow Art Galleries, and has been put on view there, being the only picture there by an artist of Icelandic descent.

The Icelandic Canadian has received copies of the papers from Scotland and England which carry the news of the Galleries' acquisition of the picture, and which give information on Emile Walters and his Art taken from the Icelandic Canadian.

One of the Old country papers, **The Scotsman**, carried a large reproduction of 'The Harp of the Valkyries'.

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## THE LAXDÆLA SAGA

(A Lecture delivered at the Icelandic-Canadian Evening School)

### § 1

Thucydides, the first scientific Greek historian, asserted with good reason that his writings were 'a possession forever'. The authors of the Icelandic Sagas nowhere set down a similar claim. Yet they might well have done so, for many of their best works rank in regard to historical accuracy and stylistic excellence with the greatest literary masterpieces not only of ancient but also of modern times.

Long ago continental scholars especially in Germany and Scandinavia recognized the greatness of Iceland's early literature. In the English-speaking world similar recognition was delayed largely due to general ignorance of Old Icelandic. It became the task of Oxford and Cambridge to bring to light what had long been hidden save to the enlightened few. It was the pioneering work of Vigfússon aided by York Powell at the former university, and Magnússon, helped by the Oxonian William Morris, at the latter, that set the vogue for serious attention to the Icelandic Sagas in the learned societies of Britain. Many English men of letters have carried on the good work. Two Oxonians of northern origin inevitably come to mind in this connection: Craigie and Ker. Sir William A. Craigie, during a long and busy career, has done much to advance Icelandic scholarship, being himself an authority on the language. Among his writings his little volume *The Icelandic Sagas* (Cambridge 1913) is a precise and penetrating study of the entire subject. Professor W. P. Ker, another great lover of

Icelandic literature, has written much of basic importance about the Sagas in his book *Epic and Romance*, as well as in his *Collected Essays*. Of the more recent writings about the Icelandic Sagas in English one might single out *Edda and Saga* (B. S. Phillpotts, London, 1931), *The Origin of the Icelandic Sagas* (Knut Liestøl, Oslo, 1930) and *The Old Norse Sagas* (Halvdan Koht, New York, 1931).

### § 2

*The Laxdæla* is recognized by critics as one of the outstanding examples of the great Icelandic Family Sagas. These are the histories of various districts in Iceland from the earliest settlements in the country. Naturally they devote their major attention to the great houses of the community, tracing their fortunes in many instances to their Norwegian homeland. As its name indicates, the *Laxdæla* deals with the early life of a district in West Iceland, concentrating on the valley community of the Salmon River. The story at times goes further afield and even abroad, but all in all, the area covered is essentially very small. One must remember however, that everything in connection with Iceland is on a small scale; the modes of living there are simple and the men are few. An outsider therefore is apt to conclude *a priori* that history there must be 'much ado about nothing'. This view however is unsound. Indeed this feature of Iceland is actually an asset in two important respects. Iceland is a sort of *multum in parvo* where one can see democracy at work

on a small and simplified scale, almost like in some of the early Greek city-states. Again the writers of Icelandic history, the authors of the Sagas found in the simple realism of the early life on the island a fine opportunity to delineate the doing of its inhabitants with precision and clarity, and to probe into the characters and motives of the men who brought them to pass. Nowhere has history been chronicled with greater detachment, nowhere have the springs of action viz. the characters of the personages, been more effectively presented than in the Icelandic Sagas.

### § 3

The two oldest fragments of manuscripts of the **Laxdæla** Saga are in the so-called Arn. Magn. Collection at Copenhagen. One is a single sheet of vellum no. 162 d 2; the other is no. 162 d 1. Both belong to the 13th century. Vellum no. 132 in the same collection was the basis of the first great edition of the Saga, published at Copenhagen in 1826, with a Latin translation by Þorleifr G. Repp. This MS was written shortly after 1300. The vellum of the Saga known as **Vatnshyrna** was destroyed with many other rare manuscripts in the fire at Copenhagen in 1728. The Icelandic Literature Society in Copenhagen possesses however two paper copies of this lost vellum; they are known as nos. 225 and 310 in that collection.

More recently **Laxdæla** has been published several times. Dr. Jón Þorkelsson edited the Saga in 1867 at Akureyri, Iceland. This is really a reprint of the 1826 edition. Dr. Kr. Kalund brought out at Copenhagen (1889-91), for the Society of Old Norse Publications, his carefully prepared edition. With a few verbal changes this was the basis for the popular edition of the **Laxdæla** by V.

Ásmundarson, Reykjavík, 1895. The last-named one is now superseded by the monumental edition by Dr. Einar Ól. Sveinsson who revised the text completely by a comparative study of all the extant MSS of the Saga and set his results out in a **de luxe** edition. Perhaps the edition of the **Laxdæla** by the Communist-novelist Halldór Kiljan Laxness, published at Reykjavík in 1941, should be mentioned here, if only for condemnation: the editor unscientifically and wilfully modernized and abridged this ancient masterpiece.

Of translations accessible to English readers there are three: the one by Muriel A. C. Press in the Temple Series, London 1899, is still found in libraries; the others, by Robert Proctor (London 1903) and Þorstein Veblen (New York, 1925), are listed by publishing houses in the United States.

### § 4

In regard to the date of composition of the **Laxdæla** and its author, nothing can be said with certainty. There are however one or two pieces of evidence. The **Eyrbyggja Saga** quotes the **Laxdæla**. This family Saga of a neighboring district is regarded as having been written ca. 1250. Again the **Laxdæla Saga**, in its last authentic chapter (78) refers to a certain Ketill Guðmundsson as 'abbot at Holyfell'. This clergyman died in 1220. It is generally held that incumbents of the church at Herdholt were responsible for the text of the Saga; Jón Sigurðsson surmised that its final redactor was a clergyman who died ca. 1230.

Internal evidence of the Saga would support the theory that the place of composition was Herdholt and its author a clergyman. The importance of this farmstead and its family is set out clearly in the **Laxdæla** in its earlier

and middle portions. Again, the place given to Christianity in the Saga implies, if not actually a bias, at any rate great interest. This is conspicuous in the presentation of King Ólafr Tryggvason, and also of Guðrún as an anchorite at Holyfell towards the end of the story.

Generally speaking, the **Laxdæla Saga** covers the history of this Icelandic district from 892 to 1073, though it has been held that 1073, save for a single reference, is too late and that the real end of the Saga comes in 1031, with the death of Snorri goði. As to the veracity of the Saga, opinions of experts have varied. It is generally agreed that there are errors in its chronology. Radical critics have doubted the historicity of much that takes place in the Saga at points outside of Iceland, for which there is little or no corroborative evidence, and to which the author in any case could not have had access. The popularity of some of the Saga-persons at foreign courts has often been impugned; for example it has been questioned whether Ólafur Pá could have obtained the succession at Dublin, and whether Ólafr Tryggvason, King of Norway, would have given in marriage to Kjartan Ólafsson his sister Ingibjörg. Again some ask: Does the passage in **Laxdæla** in which Þorkell Eyjólfsson bandies words with King Ólaf the Holy of Norway about church-timber appear probable? As to episodes in the Saga that occur in Iceland, there is naturally less suspicion. One may have an uneasy feeling about minor matters such as the Hrappr-episode; one need not however suspect the passage in which there is a reference to the 'leek-garden' of Guðrún. This may have been a vegetable garden, for such were known in Iceland from early times down through the centuries.

The **Laxdæla Saga** though it is not sound altogether in respect to chronology, and perhaps not entirely free from fiction, has been confirmed in reference to its descriptions of places and the assignment of place-names. Researches, as reported in the annual of the antiquarian society of Iceland, supply evidence on this head.

### § 5

Geneology and geography occupy a prominent position in the earlier part of the **Laxdæla**. This is in keeping with the realism which is such a characteristic feature of all this literature. As is natural, the introductory part is long drawn out; the interest is widely scattered, and many persons are introduced; the basis for the Saga of the district from its first settlements is being laid. The tempo of this portion of the narrative is rather dilatory; if the reader is eager to get to the Kjartan—Guðrún part of the Saga, the author will not hurry: it is his business to narrate not merely a love-story, but the story of a district, with its appropriate budget of *minutiae*. Hence much is chronicled that seems irrelevant to the lives of the main personages, much too that is trivial and some things too that are absurd, for instance, the quaint beliefs and superstitions of the folk in the countryside. These justify their inclusion: they are a part of the life and times that are being set down. In the countryside there is much farm work to be done, men must get timber, secure changes of horses for mounts; even on occasion a person of prominence may take on an errand-chore for some nobody as he goes about his own business of greater importance. The women too must play their part in such primitive life: even Guðrún attends personally to the laundry of the house and has in her care a vegetable plot.



## § 6

This leisurely and realistic introduction serves as a prologue to the Kjartan—Guðrún story which constitutes the tragic climax of the *Laxdæla*. In this portion, it has been held, the Saga-author is, to some extent at any rate, under the spell of an old Scandinavian tradition, and the *Laxdæla* has here an Icelandic version of the Brynhild theme, so famous in the Story of the Germanic Volsungs, and enshrined in the extant Eddic lays. If this is in any way valid, Kjartan represents Sigurð, Guðrún, Brynhild, and Bolli, Kjartan's foster-brother and cousin, Gunnar; and, as it was the love of Sigurð and the jealousy of Guðrún that moulded the motive for Brynhild, so the love of Guðrún for Kjartan and her jealousy of Hrefna, Kjartan's wife, urge her to compel Bolli whom she has married, to become the slayer of the man she loved. Both the earlier and the later tale are instances of friends estranged by 'Fate and their own transgression; it was Fate that worked them ill'. When Sigurð had been slain Brynhild spake: 'Have joy of your weapons and hands. Sigurð would have ruled everything as he willed, had he kept his life a little longer . . .' And Brynhild and the whole house rang: 'Have long joy of your hands and weapons since you have slain a valiant king'. The Icelandic story has a parallel to this though in a somewhat lower key. In general, it ought to be observed that the parallelism should not be pressed too far nor should Fate be permitted to play too great a part in the Kjartan—Guðrún tragedy. But more on this last point later.

## § 7

The author of the *Laxdæla* writes at times as if he were under the influence

of ideas which are commonly associated with the Age of Chivalry of later times. This manifests itself in passages where the self-consciousness of the writer seems to emerge, where he indulges in reflection or gives way to sentiment. Fortunately the instances of abstract ethical reflections in the Saga are not very numerous. An example may be found in the remark of King Ólafr Tryggvason when he said: 'It is manifest from Kjartan's mien that he deems he possesses greater protection, in his might and in his weapons than where Thor and Odin are'. This is in the same spirit as the saw expressed by William Morris: 'If neither Christ nor Odin help, why then Still at the worst we the are sons of men'.

Another characteristic of the Saga which has its counterpart in the literature of chivalry is the love of description. This extends to love of illustration in regard to arms, wearing apparel and other finery, as well as to a love of delineation in reference to the personages themselves. Delight in the last-named is however found in all the Saga-literature; in all of it individuals are minutely noticed and delineated. Incidentally from this acuteness of observation come about the numerous nick-names assigned to persons in the *Laxdæla*, as well as in the other Sagas.

It is however indulgence in description to excess that occasionally enters into the Saga that one must mark with disapproval. One such instance is definitely to be found in the *Laxdæla*: it is the shepherd-lad's description of the posse of ten men that went to the slaying of Helgi Harðbeinsson. Here the author's love of pictorial presentation gives a sense of unreality to his narrative. The reader at once asks: How could a shepherd-lad notice and recall

(Continued on page 46)



## *Forty Men Rescued in One Night*



The village in Eskifjord. The mark X shows the location of the farmstead Veturhúsum. The arrow shows where the heiði was crossed.

In the issue of Sept. 25, 1949, of "Lesbók", the literary supplement to Morgunblaðið, the largest daily published in Reykjavík, there is a report of a most heroic deed performed by two young Icelanders during the American occupation of Iceland in the last World War.

On the east coast of Iceland there is a deep fjord called Reyðarfjörður. After extending a considerable distance inland it breaks into two arms. The arm on the north side is called Eskifjörður and on the north side of it almost at the foot is a market town called Eskifjarðarkauptún. On the north side of the south arm, near the foot, is a town called Búðareyri. Between the two arms there is a mountain ridge or plateau, about ten miles wide, called Eskifjarðarheiði. Wasteland of this type in Iceland is called a 'heiði'. The word is of the same origin as the present English word heath

but usually refers to much higher land

A platoon of soldiers had been detailed to cross the heiði from Búðareyri to Eskifjarðarkauptún. The journey was evidently for training purposes as the men carried full battle equipment. The heiði they crossed does not seem very high but mountain distances and heights are often deceiving.

In the fairly free translation a few names of places and rivers and descriptions in reference to them have been omitted as they would have no meaning to the Western reader.

★

In the last World War there was a large army of occupation in Búðareyri. It has been estimated that there were usually about two thousand soldiers there. The population of the town is only three hundred and fifty. The army of occupation erected a large hall, still in use, which provided ac-

commodation for moving pictures, dances, temporary hospital accommodation, a store and a post-office etc. In the main, the army of occupation got along very well with the townspeople and the people in the vicinity. Many an incident worthy of publication occurred but on this occasion only one event will be described — a very sad event which at the time attracted wide spread attention.

Early in the morning of January 20, 1942, sixty nine soldiers, in full battle-dress, left Búðareyri under the leadership of a young lieutenant, Bradbury by name. It had been decided to cross the mountain by going through a pass called Hrævarskarð and thus reach the top of the mountain and then proceed on the other side to Eskifjarðar-kaup-tún, which was the ultimate destination.

This particular morning the weather was beautiful and it did not occur to any of the men that great hardship and suffering awaited them on this journey.

When they reached the pass they discovered that it was filled with snow, hard as ice, and it would have been impossible to ascend without ice chisels which they did not have. But they did not give up their plan of reaching their destination. They proceeded further up the valley, then up another valley, where the travelling was not quite so difficult and finally reached the top of the mountain (heiði). But this had taken two or three hours longer than anticipated.

Between six and seven in the evening the men had reached the edge of the top of the mountain ridge. From there on it was down hill to the valley in Eskifjörður. But by that time it was quite dark. It started to rain and the rain kept increasing. Then it started

to blow. But the men kept on, slowly creeping along, carrying heavy packs with rifles slung over their shoulders. The storm increased in violence — suddenly it had become a hurricane accompanied by a record down pour of rain. All creeks rapidly became gushing rapids and waterfalls which dashed down the water runways with great violence and uproar.

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Now the story turns to a farmstead called Veturhúsum (Winter-houses) which is below the mountain slope on the Eskifjörð side. It is a small house (lítið kot) on the outskirts of a farm, now deserted. A young farmer, Páll Pálsson by name, lived there with his mother and two sisters. That particular evening, Magnús, Páll's brother, happened to be there. By eleven o'clock the elements had let loose. The storm raged and the rain poured, even beyond what one could imagine. It occurred to Páll that in order to feel that everything was secure he should weather the storm to see whether the doors on the sheep-fold and a store-house close by were securely fastened for the night. When Páll had performed this chore and was on the way back it seemed to him that he was near some living being. A cold uncomfortable shiver crept through him but he mustered courage.

His eyes glimpsed a dark object; he realized that it was a human being. He looked down and there he came across a soldier, motionless as if he were dead. He put his hands under his shoulders and raised him. The man became conscious and he carried him into the house. Hot coffee and bread and butter were prepared for the unexpected guest. He recovered surprisingly soon.

Páll could not speak English nor

could the soldier speak Icelandic. But the soldier managed to be able to make Páll understand that many many other soldiers were out there, somewhere in the darkness. When Páll realized this he lit lights in the rooms so that they could be seen from the outside. This guiding light was indeed quite dull in the terrifying darkness, but nothing more could be done. Then Páll and his brother prepared to go outside. They took a coal oil lantern with them. It was difficult to keep the lantern lit in the hurricane, but they did manage to do it and the lantern proved of great service during the night.

The brothers had not gone very far when they came across two men completely exhausted. They helped them to the house and by this time the women had started to prepare food in readiness for the very distressed men that were expected. All night until morning the two brothers travelled back and forth searching for men and all night the three women made coffee and prepared food for the men brought in from the raging storm and the blackness of the night. Many trips were made because they usually found one or two men together. One of the soldiers who was carried in just before dawn died shortly afterwards.

Before the night was over the supply of fuel was exhausted. It happened that the very next day coal was to be bought from a coal-freighter which was in the harbour at Eskifjörð. But Páll was resourceful. He and his brother took some fence posts and hurriedly cut them and in that way were able to keep the place warm for the distressed and exhausted men. All food in the home, which could be prepared, was consumed. The house became crowded as the number of men increased. The strong had to stand

and the weak were put in the beds. All the soldiers behaved as gentlemen and thanked the people in the home for their hospitality which was as generous as was possible under the circumstances.

A short distance from the farmstead, Veturhúsum, there are two rivers one of which has two forks. In order to reach the town in Eskifjörð it was necessary for the soldiers to cross either the one river or the two forks of the other. Some of the soldiers who were the first to go down the mountain slope and reach the rivers were able to cross, though not without difficulty. But as the flow of water increased it became impossible to cross them. It may therefore be taken for granted that if the men who were rescued by Páll, had attempted to ford the rivers they would have lost their lives.

By dawn the storm had abated and the weather was fair. A general search was made over the mountain. Eight corpses were found. Among them was the young lieutenant. Between fifteen and twenty men were able to survive the ordeal of the night.

This fateful journey, which began in the mildness of the morning of January 20, at Búðareyri, came to this sad ending: nine men lost their lives, many were completely exhausted and had to stay in bed for many days. Through exceptional unselfishness, energy and presence of mind Páll Páls-son and his brother rescued from forty to fifty men. Páll has not received any recognition for this unexampled deed of heroism. He did, though, receive a letter of gratitude from the officer in command at Búðareyri and a slight compensation for the food and the wear and tear of clothes.

**Davíð Jóhannesson**

**Translated by W. J. Lindal**

## ON THE HOOF

By. G. BERTHA DANIELSON

Kneeling on the rock, Jack McKay stooped to fill his bucket from the lake. He eyed the heavy roll of dense waters, and the jagged ice-crust forming along the shoreline.

"It shouldn't be long now," he muttered into his graying beard.

The wind had veered to the northwest, and already a little snow had fallen. Its soft flakes clung to the evergreens and spread a transforming blanket over the scarred ugliness of the campyard where tree-stumps mounted a white-capped guard.

Jack climbed the slippery bank to the cabin. From the woodpile the bright eyes of Slinky, the weasel, peered at him; and a squirrel scuttled from his path. High in the tallest jackpine a whisky jack preened his feathers and wiped his beak in satisfaction; and deep in the dusky thicket an owl hooted.

Jack entered the cabin.

"The owls are hootin'," he told Gabe, the Indian. "That's a good sign. It'll freeze with the changing moon, if it clears and the wind blows north."

He seated himself before the net spread over the camp floor and began tying on corks as if his very life depended on it.

"Got to be ready soon's the ice holds," he said.

Again he heard the owl hooting in the stillness of early dusk; now near at hand. And then a rival sound caught his attention: the faint purr of an outboard upon the lake.

It grew in intensity as they listened.

"It's comin' here," Gabe, the Indian, volunteered.

They were Duncan's men.

"There's caribou at the North End, '

they said as they gulped their hot coffee thankfully.

We're goin' after 'em in the morning. Thought we could camp here for the night. Maybe you'd like to come along, Jack?"

They were off with the first glimmer of day. The wind was down. Fleecy snowclouds still hung heavy in the heavens, and no ice-scum as yet visible upon the lake. But the big water loomed before them cold and forbidding as they putt-putted out past the bay and through the narrows. Already the spray froze about their canoe and clung to their oilers.

The heavy morning mist cleared. Islands passed by them in endless numbers: small, rugged, their hoar-frosted trees white against the sombre gray of the waters.

Jack pulled in to one of them to boil the kettle for the noon meal. Around it the water crusted a little in thin ice then crumbled away from the canoe, parting to let them pass.

But it boded ill.

In silent haste they ate their bacon and beans, and again travelled north. It was not far now—just around the bend.

And now there was again a thin sheet of ice through which they plowed. Slowly the canoe struggled past the point.

"The caribou!" Jack shouted.

He could see the herd in plain view upon the margin of the lake. They searched the frosty breeze with distended nostrils, then pawed the snow and lifted their heads high in curiosity.

At the very water's edge a big buck, their leader, stood. Brawny and broad-



antlered, he towered above the common herd. His creamy coat contrasted strangely with their duller grays. His proud bearing flashed a bolder spirit.

Gabe pointed a dusky finger.

"Plenty big Attik!" he muttered.

"Attik!" John repeated. "Good enough name for him."

He estimated the distance.

They were well out of rifle range; and the ice upon the bay thickened as the canoe plied ahead.

It was useless. Jack killed the motor.

"There they are", he said grimly. "But they're not our meat. No canoe can plow through this crust. We can't

even break it with a paddle. We'll have to go back and wait till it freezes and they cross the lake."

A week passed by. The winds held their breath as each day the trees hung heavy and glistening. Each night a million stars sent their splendor through the clear, crisp air, while the jagged crust along the shore stretched farther and thicker out across the bay, and over the larger lake beyond, till at last it would hold a man.

Then one night Jack was roused from his sleep by a blood-curdling howl, and the answering chorus of the pack.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The author of this story is Mrs. Bodvar Johnson, of Flin Flon. She was born in the Swan River Valley (Bowsman River) and her parents were the pioneer settlers, Jonas and Johanna Danielson, from Borgum in Skógarströnd, Iceland.

Mrs. Johnson has written stories for **Outdoor Canada**, while it was published in Winnipeg, but when we asked her to tell us a few particulars about herself she wrote such interesting things about the north country that we are tempted to quote a few of them:

"Flin Flon is not a frontier. It is a very progressive city of some 12,000 or so. . . . The north is a big expanse. Yet because of the sparse population its inhabitants from the Arctic to the Gateway (The Pas) are acquainted at least by reputation. So the festival (the Trappers Festival at The Pas) was a grand reunion of friends from far and wide: Churchill, York Factory, Nelson House, Grand Rapids (on L. Wpg.), Flin Flon, Sherridon, Gold Lake, Snow Lake, Lynne Lake and Herk Lake. The crowning og the Queen and the dog derby were but a small part of the entertainment. There were beautiful displays of birds and animals, a fisheries display; Indian handicrafts: beadwork and silkwork. A beautiful white deerskin parka, beaded in artistic design, sold for \$60.00. . . . The men have been overhauling the 'Cat' for the next trip. They leave to-night, their cat-swing creaking under tons of freight destined for Pelican

Narrows, a hundred miles away. These tractor swings, with their huge loaded sleighs and a swaying caboose in the rear where the crew eat and sleep, are the only means of transportation with heavy freight into the outposts of the north. Night and day they crawl over the wilderness of lakes and portages. They bring back the fisherman's catch of frozen fish, thousands of pounds, from Reindeer, Wollaston and Duck lakes. In later years three-ton trucks and Bombardiers have brought in the fresh fish mostly. . . . The load he (her husband) is taking in to-day is flour, gasoline and furniture to the free trader (not the Hudson's Bay Co. Post) at pelican Narrows. You may be interested to know that one of the items is a beautiful chesterfield suite for the trader's home, who is a married man with a family. With a comfortable home and a radio, many have two-way sets, there are no longer any remote places in the north. They are within an hour or two by plane, from Flin Flon, The Pas, Prince Albert or Edmonton. The north is rich in fur, fish, mineral and in future possibilities. It has colorful dynamic characters but the wilderness is not kind to 'phonies'. A man must be able to "deliver the goods", the trails are fraught with many dangers and every year they take their toll."

Mrs. Johnson knows the North well, as she often accompanies her husband on his fishing and freighting treks.



The memory of tracks in the new snow stabbed his consciousness. He had seen them fresh that day when he and Gabe were setting their nets just around the point. Huge tracks they were, crossing and criss-crossing, and finally heading northward across the lake.

"Timbers!" Jack muttered. "That's them, all right—after the caribou."

He lay motionless, listening.

Nearer and louder they came, and Jack began to dress feverishly.

"I'm going after 'em, Gabe," he told the astonished Indian. "Them killers will slaughter plenty, and drive the rest of the caribou off the lake. "They'll scatter 'em over a hundred islands, and my big game license won't be worth the paper it is written on. A man can't go hunting with the fishing season on and the nets not yet in the water. I'm going after 'em right now."

"The ice—" Gabe shouted, but Jack snatched up his rifle and dashed out unheeding.

The jewelled heavens shone above the pinetops; and through a vista of trees the moonlit lake gleamed still and white.

Jack slipped down the bank, and out upon the lake, his eyes glued to the horizon.

They were coming. He could see them now, fleeting dark shadows against the white. Ten; twenty; a hundred: the caribou herd, with the mad, howling wolf-pack at their heels.

Over the treacherous November ice they raced, across the bay. The impact of flying hoofs sent a shiver through it.

And now Jack could recognize Attik. His noble limbs dashed madly ahead, outstripping the swiftest of them. Wild-eyed and desperate he led them straight towards Jack, and the man's rifle lay forgotten in the crook of his arm. That

magnificent, panic-stricken stampede held him spellbound.

And then they were upon him. He felt the ice sway and crack. The flying hoofs shivered it into a million pieces, and Jack stood gasping upon a floating ice-raft. He swayed crazily upon its surface and held his breath in terror.

All about him the bay was swarming with struggling caribou, swimming for their lives. Out of the ice-littered bay they went; into the open narrows; and across the turbulent river beyond, and less than a hundred yards away the pack halted sending their murderous chorus into the night.

Jack stood alone amid the churning chaos of ice in the bay. Small ice-cakes smote his larger one, and he quaked lest any minute it crumble beneath him.

His eye measured the distance to the unbroken surface; and he began to ply the butt-end of his rifle for a paddle. His fragile craft moved ahead inch by inch. The dip of his makeshift paddle and the swish of colliding ice were the only sounds to disturb the now gruesome stillness.

Then suddenly Jack realized that the eerie silence was but a lull before a bursting storm.

From the gloom of one of the larger islands two desperate stragglers appeared with three great wolves after them. Through the very jaws of the waiting pack they raced. Surrounded and frantic they plunged into the water in front of Jack, vainly striving to follow the herd into the sanctuary of timber across the river.

A huge black wolf sprang from the water's edge and cut off their retreat. The buck dragged himself onto the ice once more, but a few feet away his mate struggled in the lake with another killer at her throat.

Jack reeled upon his ice-raft; but it held. He knew that in no time they would be upon him; would sink him into the frigid waters of the bay. With a last mighty effort he steered past them and jumped.

Under his feet the ice held safe and firm.

Against a clump of pitying birches at the shore the young buck stood at bay. Jack could see his heaving flank, and his terrified, dilated eyes as the snarling wolves closed in with bared fangs.

The monstrous leader of the pack leapt high above his prey. A blood-thirsty cry rent the air. It was their murderous death-cry.

Jack raised his rifle and fired; joyously he saw the beast stiffen and fall. That would scatter the pack, and be one less marauder to slaughter the herds.

Again he pulled the trigger.

The buck was his; and again the lake

was alive with creatures fleeing for their lives as he peppered the lead at the disappearing timbers.

Jack looked out over the narrows and across the river. All was still; there was no sign of life. The noble Attik had led his herd well into the safety of the shadows. And the two struggling in the water were gone too: caribou and ghostly gray killer, under the relentless ice.

Smoke streamed from the stovepipe of his cabin, and the light shone through the trees. Gabe, the Indian, was ambling down the path towards him.

"One time I tink y'u drown; then I say wolves get him for sure; then I hear 'Bang! Bang! Bang!' " he laughed.

A grin of satisfaction spread over Jack's rugged features.

"I scattered those sons a guns all right," he muttered. "And you know," he added in pleased anticipation, "There ain't nothin' like a feed of barrenland caribou."

## NEWS

The Icelandic National League Convention was held at the Good Templar's Hall, Winnipeg, February 20, 21, and 22, Rev. P. M. Petursson presided.

A resolution was passed to change the convention time from February to June.

During the convention concerts were held by the Icelandic Canadian Club, the League chapter, 'Frón' and the Icel. Nat. League. They were all well attended and featured local and guest artists and speakers, as well as moving pictures on Iceland and Canada.

At the final concert the League presented honorary memberships to Stefan

Einarsson, editor of 'Heimskringla', E. P. Jonsson, editor of 'Lögberg', and G. J. Oleson of Glenboro, Man.

The president, Mr. Petursson, was re-elected as were all the members of the executive.

Adrian Gorick, second year student in Arts at the U. of M. was elected by a large majority to the office of president of Third Year Arts (for the coming year) on February 22.

Mr. Gorick is the son of Thomas Gorick, and Oddny (Frederickson) Gorick, who is a sister of Bjorg Frederickson, formerly a piano teacher in Winnipeg.

## Snjolaug Sigurdson New York Debut



Miss Snjolaug Sigurdson gave her debut piano recital at Times Hall, Sunday, March 12. On the Monday following, news flashes on the radio and in the daily press termed her recital "a triumph". One radio station announcing: "New York critics are handing orchids to Winnipeg pianist, Snjolaug Sigurdson". A special wire from N. Y. to the Winnipeg Tribune reported: "Winnipeg born pianist receives a warm ovation here Sunday which the city's music critics say was justly earned".

The New York Times describes Miss Sigurdson as "primarily a miniaturist who brought color and delicacy to her smaller pieces." The Times says further: "Miss Sigurdson showed a fluent technique allied to musical sensitivity. She is neither a powerful pianist nor an oversentimental one. She phrases clearly, articulates neatly, and possesses a warm agreeable tone. For the most part Miss Sigurdson was fully in

command of her total resources, and it was only in the massive fugue of the Franck piece that the notes got a little out of hand."

The N. York Herald Tribune voices its high praise for her handling of the Franck work: "Miss Sigurdson has a well schooled technique and is a musician of substantial attainments with a secure sense of style. Her discourse of Franck's Prelude, Chorale and Fugue was not without moments of true perceptiveness. There was sensitivity, too, if not quite the poetic insight and intensity demanded, in her interpretations of Brahms' Intermezzo, Op. 116, No. 6; Ballade, Op. 118, No. 3, and Capriccio, Op. 116, No. 7. Hindesmith's Second Sonata was accorded an intelligent, if rather small-scaled account."

Other critics praised her deftness, charm and command of idiom in more romantic passages. "Miss Sigurdson is easy to listen to and permits full intellectual enjoyment of the material she handles", one critic said. She was also praised for her "crystalline qualities" and "plastic technique".

The large audience was enthusiastic in its appreciation and the artist was presented with a number of bouquets, roses, orchids and gladioli, including an armful of red roses from the Icelandic Canadian Club.

When Miss Sigurdson left Winnipeg in 1946 to study in New York she was awarded a \$1,200 Travelling Scholarship from the Icelandic Canadian Scholarship fund, which has been so generously subscribed to by many non-members, who through it wish to assist, talented young artists. Apart from this small assistance Miss Sigurdson

has the distinction of having achieved her 'triumph' the hard way, and solely on her own merits as a brilliant and sensitive artist, and as a hard worker! During these years of her intensive training with the eminent New York music master, Ernest Hutcheson, she has supported herself as a full time music teacher.

Miss Sigurdson will be the guest artist at the annual concert given by the

Associated Canadian Travellers, April 29, at the Civic Auditorium, Winnipeg. For this concert, in aid of the T. B. clinics, the sponsors engage the services of top-flight artists, preferably of Winnipeg origin. Winnipeegers will be looking forward with happy anticipation to hearing Miss Sigurdson.

Following is the full text of a review by a New York Music critic.

### *Snjolaug Sigurdson Presents Piano Recital at Times Hall, New York*

Nixon Elphinstone

Miss Snjolaug Sigurdson presented last night at Times Hall a program which opened with the first great romanticist, John Sebastian Bach, (miscalled John the Severe) and ended with another, and perhaps the last, Frederick Chopin. Between these two flaming torches Miss Sigurdson placed the lesser lights of Cesar Franck, Brahms, Hindemith, Ravel and Debussy. The resultant impression was less that of a brilliant coruscation than a lambent glow. If one were to search for a single word with which to describe Miss Sigurdson's playing it might be said that it has a certain quality of "graciousness" with which she invests everything she plays — even when what she plays is Hindemith's Sonata No. 2 which can hardly be said to possess much inherent graciousness.

Perhaps somewhat paradoxically, her approach to music — which is an intensely personal one — does not prevent this gifted artist from revealing to her listeners the spirit of the music itself and not alone the personality of Snjolaug Sigurdson.

The Bach-Rummel "Jesus Christ, the Son of God" was rendered with the

simplicity which it calls for — a simplicity which is really the expression of the majesty of the old Master's thought and demands not only an iron-disciplined technique but an intellectual and spiritual understanding of the music itself. In the Cesar Franck Prelude, Chorale and Fugue which followed and the Hindemith Sonata that came later, Miss Sigurdson was successful where it is easy to fail: she was able to strike fire from the uncompromising flint of the first and to distil some prismatic drops from the aridity of the second — no mean achievement. Both were beautifully played. The three Brahms pieces were given with true Brahmsian vividness: the idyllic interlude of the Ballade was delicately limpid.

The second half of the recital introduced a novelty in the form of four "Studies in Line" by Barbara Pentland, titled respectively, Graph, Circles, Straight Lines and Zigzag. These little pieces would have pleased Robert Schumann, of whose whimsicality they contain more than a hint. They are gnomic, each of the four endeavoring to outguess the other! There followed Ravel's Jeux d'eau and Pavane pour une infante defuncte and De-



bussy's l'isle joyeuse, all played with a Gallic verve tempered by an un-Gallic reticence perhaps to be looked for in an artist whose lineage is of the North. Yet, in l'isle joyeuse, there were to be heard the rustling of birch-leaves and the purling of streams over bright pebbles — things perhaps unthought of by Debussy himself but, as interpreted by the artist, thought of by her listeners. Miss Sigurdson rendered the music with Debussyan sparkle and delicacy.

The F minor Fantaisie of Chopin ended the recital. This immortal work is a test, not so much of the pianist's technique (which nevertheless must be of the first order to meet the de-

mands of the music's difficulty) as his of her grasp and comprehension of the elemental surge of emotion which sways the whole composition from beginning to end. If this elemental surge is not made evident at once in the opening bars it cannot be generated later and it is not the Fantaisie of Chopin that we hear, but something else and something that would be better not to have been heard. It was Chopin's Fantaisie that Miss Sigurdson gave her listeners. The surge and sway were there, whatever differences of opinion there might have been in regard to certain nuances of shading. A lovely work of art, and Miss Sigurdson interpreted it with loving artistry.

## MANITOBA JUNIOR CURLING CHAMPIONS

Congratulations to the Arborg rink, so ably skipped by Michael Zacharcziuk, which won the Free Press Trophy emblematic of Manitoba's Junior Curling Championship, and the right to represent Manitoba in the Dominion Junior Curling finals at Quebec City during the recent curling finals.

Curling in third place for the Arborg rink was young David Einarson, son of Mr. and Mrs. G. O. Einarson of Arborg, who repeatedly and consistently came through with fine shots to give

able support to his skip in winning the Manitoba championship. The others on the rink were Steve Glowack and John Senow.

At Quebec these boys led the race being the only undefeated rink after six out of nine games had been played. From there on the boys weakened to lose the championship to the Saskatchewan rink.

This is the second successive year these boys have won the Manitoba Junior Curling Championship. We will be looking forward to them winning a clean sweep next year. Good luck boys.

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## *Northern Missionary*

By HELEN SIGURDSON

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The mission stood at the top of a hill about half a mile from the harbor, and I was thoroughly tired by the time we reached there. Churchill may not have a large population but it covers quite a bit of ground and I'd spent the morning walking over the rocky terrain visiting the various points of interest. I was glad to sit down for a few minutes in one of the wooden pews at the back of the church.

It was a good place to rest, the church was small, but nicely proportioned and beautifully clean. The varnished pine pews were dusted, the little reed organ had been polished till the wood had a soft luster. There was a snowy cloth edged with lace on the altar and china vases filled with fresh flowers.

The windows too were polished. They were tall and narrow with gothic arches. Through the clear glass I could see the town, hotels, restaurants, trading posts near at hand, the bay in the distance with the tall red and white elevators and the big warehouses, standing close to the water. Three big grain boats were moored next to the docks and even at that distance, I could see the trucks coming and going down there and the great crane unloading the shipment of automobiles which had come in from England. An American army truck loaded with soldiers went by and then another piled with aluminum plates on its way out to the camp where they were putting up a new barracks. A plane passed over head and then another. Churchill was a busy place last summer.

Through the windows at the other side of the church I saw the white

painted rectory with the garden behind it—rows of carefully tended vegetables and a bright border of pink and white petunias. Farther on was a low embankment covered with arctic orchids. It was midsummer and the sun was shining but there was little warmth in those oblique rays. The very colors of the landscape were clear and cold like a winter sunset, the deep blue of the bay, the pale brown earth, the frosted green of the arctic moss and the purple wild orchids which formed a blanket over parts of the country.

My glance returned to the missionary who stood before the white painted altar rail talking to the small group of tourists. He was a small man, dressed in a red wool jersey and navy blue slacks. If you had met him on a university campus you might have mistaken him for a freshman, he seemed so young.

He was telling them about the difficulties in getting water. In the winter there's plenty of snow for washing and household use. But in summer when there isn't much rain it is a different story. Four feet from the surface the ground is always frozen so there's no use trying to dig a well. The American army has piped water from a lake but so far there isn't enough to spare for the civilian population.

Then he began talking about his work among the Indians. Not only is he a preacher, but he also often has to act as janitor for the church. He also teaches and helps train the choir, his parish covers hundreds of miles and every year he travels through it sometimes by plane, sometimes with dog

team or by canoe sometimes on snowshoes, sometimes on foot. He told us many things about his life and the people with whom he worked. This is the story I remember best.

During the summer there had been a very serious epidemic among the Indian babies. A few days before a man had come from a distant outpost with a sick baby and brought it to the missionary. The minute he saw the child, the missionary knew that there was little hope. He went with the father over to the army hospital where a number of similar cases were being treated and left the baby in the care of the doctors and nurses.

Three days later, he returned home to find a box on the doorstep. The baby had died and the hospital authorities had sent the body back to the mission. It was late in the afternoon by the time he located the father in one of the numerous Indian encampments at the edge of the town. Together they returned to the mission. The missionary's wife was in the hospital at the

time with a new baby. So he himself dressed the baby and built a simple casket out of a packing box. This was the busy season, the boats were being loaded, the father was a stranger in the community and dazed with grief. So it was the missionary who took his pick and shovel and dug the little grave in the churchyard. The sun was going down by the time he had finished reading the burial service and filled the grave. Then he and the father returned to the mission. He gave the man supper and food for his long journey back to his own people, and watched him as he walked away in the northern twilight, which passes for night in midsummer.

Yes, as the poet Service says that the North is a country where "only the strong shall thrive; and surely the Weak shall perish". And yet, I like to think that He who "heeds the sparrow's fall" has so kindly a representative up there to give a thought to the small and weak who are destined to perish.

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## BLONDAHL EFFORT ON FUND PRAISED

Officials of the Canadian 'March of Dimes' polio campaign said much of the success of the drive in Edmonton was due to the efforts of **Omar Blondahl**, CFRN announcer. The campaign snowballed to unexpected proportions and became known as "Omar's Polio Fund".

Omar is a former Wynyard, Sask., (and Winnipeg) boy who is making good in radio, and is captivating feminine listeners over CFRN with his cheery 'Breakfast With Omar', which rivals the Chicago radio's Breakfast Club. Every household, at the appointed time, stays tuned to Omar's

program, where he sings a bit and plays his own accompaniment on the guitar in a 'folksy' sort of way. On the air he frequently refers to his Icelandic origin and has sung a number of Icelandic songs which he translates himself.

When Horace Brown, founder and director of the March of Dimes was officially presented with a cheque for \$12,000 in aid of the fund, he warmly praised the effort put forth by Mr. Blondahl and members of the CFRN staff saying that the amazing response to the campaign demonstrated with renewed force that the 'March of Dimes' is a "little man's show".

## Bergthor Emil Johnson

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It is not the quantity but the quality of years that determines the contribution for good an individual may make during his allotted span of life on earth. That truth came forceably home to us when Bergthor Emil Johnson passed away on February 28th last. He was only fifty-three years of age, but had already given so much of himself in the community in which he lived and in the organizations which were close to his heart that a permanent imprint of his deeds will remain.

Bergthor was born on Hecla Island in Lake Winnipeg, a veritable outpost of Iceland. He moved with his parents to Lundar, the centre of a district predominantly Icelandic, which not only created and nurtured its own culture and athletic enterprises but also sent many of its Icelandic sons and daughters to seats of learning and centres of business activities where they have made their mark and won distinction for themselves and their ethnic group.

From Lundar, Beggi moved to Winnipeg, the city which our people even as far away as California, refer to as the capital of the Icelanders in America.

Bergthor inherited the Icelandic bent to literature and poetry and to a marked degree possessed the gift of poesy himself. He was passionately fond of the poetry of David Stefansson, a leading contemporary poet of Iceland, and with comparative ease could follow the Browning of Iceland poetry, Stephan G. Stephanson. Yet at the same time he could see the beauty of thought and poetic phrase in the Icelandic quatrains and could recite them by the score.

Such was the background. It was inevitable that Bergthor Johnson should serve with vigor and enthusiasm in our Icelandic activities and organizations. He was a pillar of strength in his church and the president of the congregation for a while. He served on the Executive of the National League, was at times a member of the Icelandic Celebration Committee and very ably supported this magazine both as a contributor and a member of the editorial staff.

Bergthor was essentially a realist. Because of his strong Icelandic background and his love of Icelandic language and literature, he found himself constantly on the crossroads between the call of duty as a Canadian and the urge to let the heart take control and unreservedly drink of the mead of Icelandic poetry and prose.

That he was able to strike a proper balance is well known to the writer. At the time of his sudden death, Bergthor had prepared the greatest part of an

article which was to be published in Iceland. It was unfortunate that he did not live to finish it because it would have been such a true analysis of the thoughts of many who have found within themselves that very same conflict but who may lack the

clear vision and the calm reasoning which were so beautifully blended in Beggi Johnson. But, as his life made abundantly clear, it is not a conflict but rather the fitting of something of value into a new surrounding — a pearl in a new setting. W. J. L.

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## *Rev. Halldor E. Johnson Lost at Sea*

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In a raging gale a small motorship enroute from Reykjavik to the Westman Islands was lost off the south coast of Iceland, with ten men aboard. Among those lost was Rev. Halldor E. Johnson, a repatriate who had spent forty years among us here in America, but whose heart remained with the hills and dales of his native land. He had returned "home" last July and had accepted a position as teacher of English in one of the state schools in the Westman Islands. But dark fate inter-

fered before he had enjoyed for long the return to his land of dreams.

Rev. Halldor was one of the legion of his countrymen who was brought up in extreme poverty, and left his native shore to seek his fortune in the New World, while leaving his heart behind in Iceland. The parents who were blessed with this new arrival in **Sólheimum** (Sun Worlds) Iceland, back in 1887, were economically unable to enjoy their little son; and so the day-old minister-to-be was taken to his grandmother's home. Driven by poverty to shift for himself at the tender age of 12, he yet managed somehow to acquire a fair education at the high school level, and at twenty-one he felt his courage and ambition equal to the challenge of America.

By dint of much application and self-denial, and with some gratefully acknowledged help from an uncle in North Dakota, Halldor was able to put in four college years at Valparaiso, Indiana, followed by theological studies in Chicago. For some years he served in several parishes of the Icelandic Lutheran Synod; but later he allied himself with the Federated church and continued in this service until his return to Iceland.

Rev. Halldor Johnson was not a flashy personality and he did not carve out for himself a career usually describ-



ed by the word "success". But he had in rich measure some of the best qualities of mankind: love of country, love for his fellow men, love of freedom, civic and spiritual. He had a burning zeal for the truth as he saw it, and the courage to bear it witness whether or not such testimony should react to his own profit. He was an avid and analytical reader of a wide scope of subjects, and contributed much valuable material to Icelandic papers and periodicals here, both original pieces and translations of historical and other interesting matter. The social and cultural life of "Vestur-Íslendingar" is the richer for his contributions and he was an unselfish supporter of worth-while community efforts wherever he resided.

Since its first issue in 1944, he was the editor of the "Brautinn", the annual publication of The United Conference of Icelandic Churches in America. And he was an enthusiastic supporter of the Icelandic Canadian Club, being fully aware of "the lasting value

which will be achieved by its extensive work in upholding and perpetuating for posterity the rich cultural heritage of Iceland", as he put it. He contributed two of the lectures on Iceland given at the Icelandic Canadian Evening School, and which were later published in the book, "**Iceland's Thousand Years**", as well as articles to the **Icelandic Canadian**.

Halldor was an interesting companion and a good conversationalist. His wide and carefully considered reading had enabled him to discuss intelligently and logically many weighty world matters, which he interpreted his own way, and expressed freely, while not forcing his opinion on anyone.

The **Icelandic Canadian** pauses to, figuratively, place a wreath on the unmarked grave of Rev. Halldor E. Johnson, at rest in the waters surrounding his beloved Homeland, and to extend a hand of sympathy to his surviving widow and relatives.

H. J. S.

## GIVES RADIO TALK

Holmfridur Danielson was guest speaker on the Trans-Canada network of the CBC March 15, on the Wednesday afternoon program given in the series called 'My Own Mother'. This series has featured talks by women living in various parts of Canada who have themselves come from other lands or whose parents came from foreign countries. In this way Canadian listeners have had a glimpse of homelife in such countries as Hungary, France, Latvia, Wales, New Zealand, Iceland, Esthonia and Russia. Mrs. Danielson spoke of family life in the pioneer settlement of Western New Iceland, and of life in Iceland as described by her own Mother.

The CBC is planning a second series which will be released direct from various other lands and will be called: "The Good Wife".

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## WINNIPEG WOMAN NAMED TO THE INDIAN AFFAIRS BRANCH

Mrs. Asta Oddson of Winnipeg is one of three Social Workers newly-appointed to the Indian Affairs branch of the federal government.

As Regional supervisor of Indian Agencies for Manitoba, Mrs. Oddson's duties will include care of the aged, guidance of children, organizing Womens clubs, sewing instructions, canning and sanitation.



## *A New Venture in Winnipeg's Music*

On February 15. the editor of the Icelandic Canadian was privileged to attend a recital sponsored by the Wednesday Morning Musicales which was, we believe, a unique event in Winnipeg's musical circles, when this city's music lovers had the opportunity to hear a full programme of Icelandic music, instrumental and vocal, given by Icelandic artists.

Songs of the motherland have always been popular entertainment in the Icelandic community here and, moreover, have been ably interpreted by our outstanding soloists, for wider audiences, in concert and over the radio. Two years ago the Icelandic Canadian club sponsored a recital featuring selections of music, both vocal and instrumental, by American and Canadian composers of Icelandic descent. This was of inestimable value in drawing to the attention of the public the large volume of work done in this field by Icelandic descendants in this country. But this is the first time a Winnipeg music club, composed wholly of non-Icelandic members, has presented a complete programme of **Music from Iceland**. It is noteworthy, also, that on this occasion works composed for the piano by an Icelander were performed for the first time in Winnipeg.

The recital consisted of an introductory address on Iceland by Mrs. V. J. Eylands, and three well-balanced groups of musical numbers, featuring a string quartet, vocal selections, and three pieces for the piano.

The lovely Icelandic costumes worn by the ladies taking part in the programme greatly enhanced the dignity of the performance and added extra

flavor to the enjoyment of the audience.

Attired in the 'peysuföt', black silk-tasseled cap, full black skirt and embroidered bodice, and wearing a long black, fur-bordered cape, Mrs. Eylands looked regal and stately as she gave her well-constructed and charmingly delivered discourse. She gave her audience, not only an interesting glimpse of Iceland and its people, but also an amazing amount of factual information concerning Iceland's recent achievements in various fields of culture. She touched on the immense output of books which, in proportion to Iceland's population is far larger than of any other nation. She described the rapid advance of the art of painting and the popularity of Icelandic pictures saying: "In fact, no home, however humble, is complete without its paintings of Icelandic scenery. Iceland is a painters' paradise, full of beauty, with its purity of atmosphere and great variety of color and form."

She recounted the nation's age-old love of fine crafts, and described in detail the delicate art of the silversmith which "is now unfortunately fast waning". Her descriptions of the various arts and crafts were cleverly woven into a composite picture of the daily life of the nation which made them delightfully entertaining as well as informative.

Mrs. Eylands focussed the attention of her audience especially on Icelandic musical activities. Beginning with the nation's innate love of singing, where everyone sings, at their work, at all gatherings, and on long or short bus trips around the country, she told us about the cathedral choir and the

other numerous mixed choirs and male voice choirs, including the male voice choir of Reykjavík which toured America in 1946.<sup>(1)</sup> "We never ceased to marvel at the clarity of tone and the perfect blending of voices. We particularly noticed the fine male voices especially the high clear tenors. They were everywhere. This quality of voice seems common among the men, also those who are wholly untrained. Our theory of explanation is the outdoor life and the atmospheric conditions".

Composing music in the larger instrumental medium is in its infancy in Iceland, for "only in this last year", says Mrs. Eylands, "has Iceland's first symphony orchestra been organized. Until now there has not been a sufficient number of well trained players . . . . On this last December 8, they played their first concert. On the program were: Mendelssohn's Fingall's Cave Overture, Chopin's Concerto in E Major and Haydn's Opus no. 94. The conductor is Dr. Páll Ísólsson, a leading musician, as composer, conductor and teacher. He conducts the cathedral choir."

She told us about many other musicians, some of whom have been featured in the Icelandic Canadian, and spoke of "Iceland's most beloved composer of recent times, Dr. Sigvaldi Kaldalóns who died in 1946. He was a successful medical practitioner, but devoted all his spare time to music. Undoubtedly he leaves a larger number of compositions than any Icelandic composer up to this time. Many of them are solos with lovely accompaniments. . . . Kaldalóns takes the themes for his compositions from the barren landscape of his country, from the hur-

ricanes and the surf on the seashore. He has stilled his harp to every passing emotion and to every inspiration of the moment. He has found sweet or sorrowful melodies everywhere; in the flowers, the seasons, the voices of nature, and the lives of his fellow men, their sorrows and their triumphs. His music reflects the moods, hopes and aspirations of his nation for a thousand years."

In telling about the Icelandic soloists, such as Elsa Sigfús, María Markan, Guðmundur Jónsson, Stefan Islandi, Pétur Jónsson and Eggert Stefansson who have won distinction at home and abroad, Mrs. Eylands said:

"Icelandic solo voices have only in recent years come to the forefront. Not that the voices did not exist but because of the high cost of training which necessitated study abroad. Now Iceland has its own 'Tónlistaskóli' or school of music, — where most of the musicians of to-day acquire the fundamental training in music and then finish abroad usually in Europe."

After listening to Mrs. Eyland's talk the audience was in a very receptive mood and could not fail to enjoy the musical numbers which followed.

The members of the string quartet were Palmi Palmason, well known violinist and member of the first violin section of the Winnipeg Symphony orchestra<sup>(2)</sup>, William Worbeck, 2nd violin, Allan Beck, viola, and Harold Jonasson, cello. They played 'Interlude' by B. Guðmundson and a group of Icelandic Folk Songs, collected and arranged by Sv. Sveinbjornson, with special arrangements for the strings by Mr. Palmason. In this group one enjoyed especially the delicate, plaint-

1) See Icel. Can. Winter 1946.

2) See Icel. Can., Winter 1949.

ive harmony of 'Sofðu Unga Ástin Min' and the robust tones and rollicking tempo of 'Góða Veizlu Gera Skal'.

Mrs. Pearl Johnson opened her group with 'Dalvisur' — Song of the Valley, — and 'Rósin' — The Rose, — from the lovely collection of 12 songs by Arni Thorsteinson, published in 1907. Then followed 'Svanurinn Minn Syngur', — My Swan Sings, and 'Heiðin Há', — The Mountains — by S. Kaldalóns, and lastly 'Draumalandið', — Land of Dreams — by Sigfús Einarsson. She was ably accompanied by Sigrid Bardal.

Pearl Johnson has, on countless occasions, both in concert and over the CBC radio network, delighted large audiences with her rendition of our Icelandic folk songs. It is always a joy to hear her sing but we feel that on this occasion she surpassed herself! Many factors contributed to the harmonious blending of artist and audience into perfect accord. There was the dazzling picture Pearl made in her elegant 'skautbúningur', with its filmy veil falling gracefully from the high head-dress, its long white robe and green mantle trimmed with white fur border; there was her vivacious explanation of the text, given before each group of songs, with a simple effective graciousness, and there was her fine voice, well disciplined to follow the dictates of the singer's intellectual and artistic interpretations. For us this meant the satisfying exploration

of every subtle mood of the songs and the initiation into each lovely nuance of tone quality.

Our dainty little Thora Asgeirson, in her long skirt, white blouse, and silver-embroidered 'upphlutur', (sleeveless low cut bodice) did full justice to the 'Three Pieces for the Piano' by Páll Ísólfsen. Being an accomplished pianist, with a number of scholarships tucked away behind her and, we feel sure, a bright career ahead, Thora is accustomed to performing compositions by the great masters, which carry a much broader theme than Ísólfsen could develop within these limited forms of Burlesque, Intermezzo and Capriccio. But the convener of the program, Mrs. Ena Foley Scott, who is a keen and discerning musician, told us that she thought it well worth while to present this music of Páll Ísólfsen to a Canadian audience. It has brightness, variety and a skillfully injected technical precision. Although it has a distinctly modern flavor we persuaded ourselves that running through it was an underlying strain of Icelandic characteristics.

Altogether the Wednesday Morning Musicale, February 15, was a very satisfying experience. The whole program was repeated by request, March 13. This time it was sponsored by the University of Manitoba School of Music, and was open to the public.

H. D.

## Receives Ph. Degree

Professor Tryggvi Oleson, received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Toronto. His Thesis being: British History in the 11th century.

Dr. Oleson is the son of Mr. and Mrs. G. J. Oleson of Glenboro, Man. He is at present professor in Medieval History, at the United College, in Winnipeg.

## WAR RERVICE RECORD



Tpr. S. A. MacNaughton



Sgt. J. D. MacNaughton



Cfn. R. C. MacNaughton

**TPR. STANLEY ALLAN MacNAUGHTON**—Born at Edmonton, Alta., June 22, 1918. Enlisted in the Canadian Army May 26, 1941. Embarked overseas Feb. 1942. Served in England. Returned to Canada March 1944. Discharged Oct. 31, 1944.

**SGT. JOHN DUNCAN MacNAUGHTON**—Born at Edmonton, Alta., Jan. 19, 1913. Enlisted in the Canadian Army Jan. 11, 1940 as instructor at Currie Barracks, Calgary, Alta. Served in England, North Africa and Italy. Was wounded at Ortona, Italy. Discharged Aug. 8, 1944.

**CFN. ROBERT CHRISTMAN MacNAUGHTON**—Born at Edmonton, Alta., Feb. 8, 1926. Enlisted in Canadian Army Oct. 31, 1944. Took his basic training in Peterboro, Ont. Later transferred to Kingston, Ont. Discharged June 21, 1946.

Sons of Mrs. Christina (Swanson) and the late William Stanley MacNaughton, Edmonton, Alta.



Fireman 1/c E. Gudbrandson Jr.

### FIREMAN 1/c EDWARD GUDBRANDSON JR.



Born at Blaine, Wash., April 21, 1926. Enlisted in the American Navy April 20, 1944. Awarded facsimile and ribbon bar with star of the Presidential Unit Citation awarded the U.S.S. Yorktown in the Pacific war area, Asiatic Pacific Area Campaign. Four stars American Area Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal and Philippine Liberation Medal, one star. Discharged May 17, 1946.

Son of Edward and Josie Gudbrandson,  
Blaine, Wash.







Lieut. Philip Roy Swainson

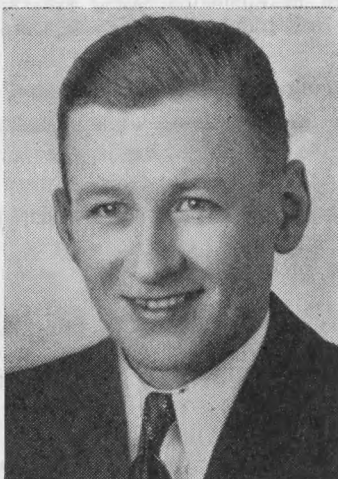


F.O. Alfred Wesley Swainson

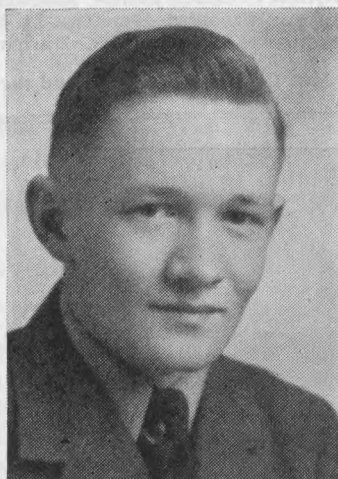
**LIEUT. (O) R.C.N.V.R. PHILIP ROY SWAINSON**—Born at Red Deer, Alta. Enlisted in the Canadian Navy 1941. Served on H.M.C. Ships Prince Robert, Gatineau and Springhill. Transferred to Air Arm and flew with 826 Firefly Squadron. Retired to non-active reserve March 9, 1947.

**F.O. ALFRED WESLEY SWAINSON**—Born at Red Deer, Alta. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. Sept. 1941. Posted overseas after completion of training. Completed tour of operations, as bomb aimer, with the bomber command. Was later instructor in England.

**SONS OF MR. & MRS. SWAIN SWAINSON, RED DEER, ALTA.**



Flt.-Sgt. Kristjan J. Thorsteinson



F.O. Johann Magnus Thorsteinson

**FLT.-SGT. KRISTJAN J. THORSTEINSON**—Born at Lundar, Man., May 22, 1914. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. 1942. At present with radio station CKGB, Timmins, Ont.

**F.O. JOHANN MAGNUS THORSTEINSON**—Born at Lundar, Man., Sept. 15, 1920. Enlisted in the R.C.A.F. 1941. Served in England and Italy.

**Sons of Mrs. Kristin and the late Gudmundur O. Thorsteinson, Winnipeg, Man.**



**LIEUT.-CMDR. H. BRYNJOLFSON**—Enlisted in the R.C.N.V.R. January 1941. Served as 1st Lieutenant on H.M.C.S. Candytuft and H.M.C.S. Matapedia and as Commanding Officer on H.M.C.S. Moose Jaw and H.M.C.S. Leaside. Served mostly in the Atlantic on convoy duty and the English Channel during D-Day operations. Discharged Oct. 10, 1945. Son of Mrs. Margaret and the late Mr. Einar Brynjolfson, Victoria, B. C.

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**LAWRENCE A. HALLDORSON**—Born at Winnipeg, Man., July 26, 1922. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. Aug. 13, 1943. Served at several points in Canada. Embarked overseas Oct 1944. Returned Oct. 1945. Discharged Nov. 7, 1945. Son of Mrs. Mabel and the late Mr. Kjartan Halldorson, Flin Flon, Man.

## TRAIN FESTIVAL CHOIRS

At least two members of the Icelandic Canadian club have been exceptionally busy during the last few months. They are Miss Vilborg Eyolfson and Miss Ingibjorg Bjarnason, who are public school teachers in Winnipeg. Part of their duties each year is to train school choirs for participation in the Manitoba Music Festival, which has now just completed its 32nd annual competition.

Miss Eyolfson trained and conducted two choirs of intermediate grade pupils from Dufferin school where she teaches, while Miss Bjarnason had four choirs taking part in the Festival from King Edward school. Her large choir of boys, grades 1-6, captured the Oldfield, Kirby & Gardiner Shield for winning the highest marks in their class of entry.

In the competition each contestant, or group of contestants, must perform

the test piece specified by the festival officials, and may also sing (or play) 1 number of their own choice. A couple of years ago Miss Bjarnason chose for 1 of her classes a translation of an Icelandic folk song, 'Stóð eg úti í tungsljósi', the accompaniment arranged by a well-known Winnipeg musician and composer, W. H. Anderson, and thus introduced this old favorite to festival audiences. So well was it received by audience and festival authorities, that it has now been given a firm place in festival music, by being listed on the program of required test pieces. In this way one more thread of our Icelandic heritage has been added to the Canadian cultural tapestry.

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Hawaii, the crossroads of the Pacific, consists of 20 islands, of which nine are inhabited.

## *The Exceptional Man*

By Lauga Geir

Practically all progress depends on the work and vision of the exceptional people, individuals who are willing to give generously of their time and efforts to build up a community and bring happiness to its inhabitants.

Among such happy and useful individuals we can certainly count Victor Sturlaugson, of Langdon, North Dakota. Perhaps you heard him last fall at the dedication of the Old People's Home at Mountain, N. D. speaking as the secretary of the board of directors. You may also have heard him at the meetings of the Icelandic Lutheran Synod where he represents the Peters congregation at Svold. We, in Dakota, frequently hear him at commencement exercises and at community gatherings.

But it is not Victor's oratory that makes him exceptional, although he is a fluent speaker. It is rather our certainty that, no matter how big the task or how difficult, **Victor will not be vanquished.** In his address at the dedication of the Home Victor said: "... the committee and the community accepted the challenge, with the aim to carry the building of this home through to a glorious finish" (see Ice. Can. Winter, 1949). Yes, even when confronted with difficulties that would stun an ordinary man, Victor will accept the challenge and what is more important, with dauntless determination and ceaseless energy he will 'carry through'.

For twenty-five years Mr. and Mrs. Sturlaugson have actively served two communities, Langdon and the Icelandic community of Mountain and Svold, where they were born and rear-

ed. Mrs. Sturlaugson, (Aldis Johnson, half sister of the noted Icelandic actress Stefánía Guðmundsd.), was born at Mountain in 1902, and Mr. Sturlaugson at Svold in 1901. Both attended N. D. Agricultural College at Fargo, Victor graduated in 1923. They were married a year later. At their silver wedding last Oct. 9 about 250 people paid their respects to the honored couple. At that time the Cavalier County Republican had some glowing praise to bestow on the couple who are serving their community so well. This publication says in part:

"Extremely active and cooperative in the township, Langdon community and Cavalier county affairs, Mr. Sturlaugson has held numerous offices in belonging to several organizations. These have included Manilla township clerk for 24 years and school district clerk for 22 years, president of the Cavalier County School Officers association at present; president for several years of the state durum show; member of the state FHA committee; president of the Langdon Lutheran church council; member of the Cavalier County association board; Masonic Holding Corporation board, 4-H county council, and 4-H leader.

A member of Lebanon Lodge No. 34 A. F. & A. M., since 1928, Mr. Sturlaugson has been active in Masonic circles for twenty years. He is a past master of Lebanon lodge, has served as district deputy grand master, is commander of the Council of Kadosh in the Langdon Scottish Rite bodies and has been elected to the honorary degree of K. C. C. H. by the supreme council of the rite; is worthy patron

of Lebanon chapter No. 37 O. E. S., and a member of Kem Temple of the Shrine.

His patriotic contributions have also been numerous, serving for a time as chairman of the county OPA board, throughout the war on the county war bond committee and for many years as solicitor for the Red Cross and other humanitarian campaigns.

Mrs. Sturlaugson has also been active in church, community and fraternal organizations. She is a past matron and present officer of Lebanon chapter No. 37 O. E. S., has been president and secretary of her Homemakers club, a 4-H club leader and secretary of the Langdon Lutheran ladies aid."

Such are the avocations of Mr. and Mrs. Sturlaugson. His vocation is the superintendency of the Langdon

experimental station, a position he has held since 1925. In addition to the experimental farm he has land of his own to work, numerous agricultural meetings to attend and detailed reports to make. Moreover the Sturlaugsons are the parents of nine children, four of whom are still at home. Two daughters are married, and two sons are attending the Agricultural college at Fargo. A great sorrow befell this generally happy family last fall when Julith, the dearly beloved youngest child was suddenly taken from her earthly home. But the courageous Sturlaugsons even through personal grief, will find the road back. They will continue to serve their community, and their home will once again radiate hospitality and good cheer as it has done for the past twenty-five years.

## HELGA SIGURDSON IN RECITAL

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Miss Helga Sigurdson gave a piano recital in Scardale, N. Y., substituting for Lubka Kolessa who was unable to appear. Miss Ruth Nolan reporter on a White Plains, N. Y. paper comments on the recital and praises it warmly. Miss Nolan says that "Her interpretations were poetic and translucent reflecting the color and warmth of the score. Highlight of her program was her performance of Ravel's 'A Boat on the Ocean', and two Debussy works, 'Girl with Flaxen Hair' and 'Fireworks'. Debussy was presented with precisely the shimmering subdued — yet sparkling quality necessary for successful interpretation, and Miss Sigurdson's technical talents provided her with ample means to produce whatever brilliant effects she desired".

## AWARD TO KARDAL

★

When O. N. Kardal left last fall to study voice at the McPhail School of Music in Minneapolis, he was awarded \$100.00 from the Icelandic Canadian Scholarship Fund. Other well-wishers have shown their interest in his career in various ways. Generous money contributions were made by Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Johnson and J. P. Sæmundson of Gimli, Man., and the I. Nat. League chapter of Gimli.

Many individuals in Minneapolis and elsewhere have rendered effective assistance which has enabled Mr. Kardal to prolong his studies at the Music School. This is gratifying, and there is no doubt that, with this added training, Mr. Kardal will be able to enrich further the musical life of the Icelandic communities.



## *Professor Charles F. Barnason*

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It takes considerable pluck and perseverance for a young man, arriving from Iceland in his teens with no knowledge of the English language, to put himself through University by his own efforts.

But nothing less would do for Charles (Karl) Frederick Barnason. He lost his father (Sigurður Bjarnason, from Reykjavik, Iceland) shortly after they moved to America in the year 1900, and being the oldest of three children, he aided his widowed mother in every way. His mother (Þorbjörg Benónýsdóttir) married a second time and is now Mrs. Henry Witzman.

Paramount with Karl was the yearning for education, and although he had to earn most of his tuition and keep, he got through high school in a comparatively short time, and graduated from City College, New York, with an A. B. degree in 1915.

At City College one of the professors, Dr. Hartman became especially interested in the brilliant, but rather reserved student. He learned Icelandic from Karl, who studied German with the professor. So rapid and phenomenal was Karl's progress in this subject that for it he won the University's highest award, a gold medal and a substantial scholarship.

This enabled him to do post graduate work at Cornell, where he obtained his Master's degree in 1917. Later he studied at the Universities of Wisconsin, Grenoble and Berlin. Returning to the United States he took his Doctorate from Harvard in 1936.

Dr. Barnason assumed the position of a fulltime appointee to the department of Modern Languages in 1937 at the Northeastern University in Bos-

ton, Mass. The following year he was made chairman of the department.

Before coming to Northeastern Dr. Barnason taught at Waynesburg College, Penn., Marietta College in Ohio, and Harvard.

Dr. Barnason was married to Guðrún Tomassdóttir, who is known to many Icelanders in this country for her stories and verse, written under the name of 'Arnrún á Felli'. Together they visited Iceland in 1922, while professor Barnason was taking his post graduate work abroad.

The active and illustrious career of Dr. Barnason, ended at its very height, when he suddenly passed away from a heart attack, Dec. 23. It is fitting to quote a few words from the tribute paid to him by his colleagues, through the message from Dean White, of Northeastern, who said:

"Always quiet and unassuming in his relationship with others, Dr. Barnason will be remembered for his earnestness and devotion to his work. He loved teaching and gave himself wholeheartedly to it. In his twelve years of service to the Day Colleges, he had hardly missed a day because of illness, so that his sudden passing came as a shock to all who knew him. His firm stride and friendly manner will be greatly missed on the campus."

Dr. Barnason's name, already published in 'Who's Who in America', has now been added to the supplement of that publication which is called 'Who Was Who', and serves as a monument to the nation's best known people who have given public service to their country in various fields of endeavor.

S. E.

## Arborg Community Effort Successful

On January 13th the first Red Cross outpost hospital in Manitoba was officially opened in Arborg, Man., and is another example of the progressive spirit of the citizens of that town.

At a large community gathering attended by officials of the Manitoba Red Cross and the Provincial Government. Mrs. E. L. Johnson chairman of the Arborg Hospital committee, cut the ribbon and declared the hospital opened. Serving on the hospital committee with Mrs. Johnson were: Mrs. E. Gislason, secretary; K. O. Einarson, treasurer; Mrs. H. S. Borgford, Dr. T. Johannesson, K. N. S. Fridfinnsson, T. Drabik, and G. O. Oddleifson. The cost of the building was \$62,000, of which \$18,000, was raised by the Arborg Hospital committee.

In addition to this, the three Lutheran Ladies' Aid groups from Geysir, Vidir and Arborg contributed handsomely to furnishing one of the wards. The pupils of the Framnes and Lowland schools did their bit to help by donating much needed objects of furniture. Substantial donations were also made by various community groups and business firms.

The hospital, which will be known as the Arborg Red Cross Memorial Hospital, fulfills a great need in the Arborg Community, and surrounding district. While normally designed to serve an area of 400 sq. miles, and a 3,000 population, it will be called up-

on to fill the needs of about 8,000 people pending the erection of other Hospital units.

The actual construction costs were jointly shared by the Red Cross Association, the Arborg community, and the Provincial Government. The site on which the hospital was built was given by Mr. and Mrs. B. J. Lifman. The maintenance and operation of the hospital will become part of the Arborg branch of the Red Cross.

The hospital is a very attractive one story-and-a-half stucco building and is truly modern in every respect. Among the many features are an emergency operating room, case room with obstetrical table, four two-bed wards and four bassinets.

The medical direction of the institution will be headed by Dr. T. Johannesson, assisted by four nurses. Housekeeping duties will be assumed by Mrs. G. Carscadden and Miss H. Magnusson.

Close to 400 persons from the community and surrounding districts attended the meeting in the Arborg Community Hall, which followed the opening ceremonies, and inspected the hospital afterwards. At the dedication ceremony Mrs. Johnson stated that the hospital had been erected as a living community memorial to those of the district who gave their lives in the last war, and to the pioneer settlers of the Arborg community.

## Appointed Stovel Press Manager



**I. C. (Carl) Ingimundson**

Every year more and more men of Icelandic origin rise to fill top executive positions in Canadian business circles. One of the more recent of such promotions to come to our attention is the appointment of I. C. (Carl) Ingimundson as Vice President and General Manager of the Stovel Press Ltd. of Winnipeg, one of Canada's largest printing and lithographing firms.

Mr. Ingimundson is a native of Selkirk, Manitoba, where he received his elementary and secondary education. He entered the University of Manitoba in 1923 from where he graduated with honors with a degree in Electrical Engineering, B. Sc. E. E. in 1927. During his University studies he was awarded three highly competitive scholarships, two Isbister scholarships, and the Professional Engineers of Manitoba scholarship.

Upon graduation Mr. Ingimundson was for a short time employed by the Winnipeg Electric Company. He next

took a position with the English Electric Company of Canada at St. Catharines, Ontario, where he remained until 1934. That year the Commonwealth Electric Corporation was founded at Welland, Ont. with whom he then accepted the position of Design Engineer. Later he became their Chief Engineer and Assistant General Manager. In 1946 he received the appointment of Vice President and General Manager of the Commonwealth Corporation. Last November he accepted his present position with the Stovel Press Ltd. Mr. Ingimundson is also a director of the Gelling Industries, manufacturers of electrical equipment at Welland, Ont.

Shortly after his graduation from the University Mr. Ingimundson was married to Miss Vera Anderson, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Th. Anderson formerly of Selkirk, now residing in Winnipeg. The Ingimundson's have three children. Elaine 20, a graduate of The Ontario Ladies College at Whitby. She is presently employed in a secretarial capacity with The Steel Company of Canada at Hamilton, Ont. Sylvia, 19, who returned here with her parents is attending the Angus School of Commerce. David 14, is attending the Earl Grey School.

Carl is the son of Sigurður (deceased) and Jonina Ingimundson, formerly residing at Selkirk, who moved to Winnipeg in 1924. Mrs. Ingimundson resides with her daughter Sylvia, Mrs. Le Roy Madder of Winnipeg. Dr. A. B. Ingimundson of Gimli is a brother.

**J. K. L.**

## Dr. Wilfred H. Thorleifson



**Dr. Wilfred H. Thorleifson**

The Icelandic Canadian always welcomes the opportunity of bringing to the notice of its readers the achievements of men and women of Icelandic extraction who, because of distance from Winnipeg or absorption into the general Canadian or American scene, are relatively unknown. One such person is Dr. Wilfred H. Thorleifson, now of Vancouver, B. C.

Wilfred was born in Gladstone, Man., the son of Johann B. Thorleifson and the late Guðrún Thorleifson, formerly of Yorkton, Sask., but for several years of Winnipeg.

Dr. Thorleifson graduated in medicine from the University of Manitoba in 1929 and spent a year at post graduate work at the Montreal General Hospital. The West lured him back and he opened an office for general practice in Sturgis, Saskatchewan, later

moving to Stalwart and then to Tisdale, both in Saskatchewan.

During the depression of the early thirties many a trip was made in fair weather and foul where the only remuneration was the knowledge that a much needed service had been rendered. Even though general practice had its compensations Dr. Thorleifson felt the urge to enter the field of specialization.

After twelve years of strenuous general practice he went to the Montreal General Hospital for post graduate study in Radiology. After two years there he had a year of study under the direction of the late Dr. Gordon E. Richards of Toronto. This was followed by a year on the staff of the Department of Radiology at the Montreal General Hospital.

In the fall of 1946 Dr. Thorleifson obtained a certification in his specialty by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and was promptly offered the position of Radiologist to the Brandon General Hospital which he accepted. His work there attracted attention and he soon had opportunities to go elsewhere. Last fall he was appointed Assistant Director of Radiology at St. Paul's Hospital, Vancouver. The hospital, the second largest hospital of that city, has one of the finest Departments of Radiology in Canada. Its work is widely recognized for its high standards.

This is another instance where one of our people is selected in preference to others because of the work he has performed. Not only is it a source of happiness to all to see individual members of the Icelandic group forge



ahead but it is especially so in cases where a new field is explored or a special branch of the professions entered. Only in this reaching out can our ethnic group make its greatest impact upon those about them, and, though small in numbers, contribute substantially to the building of the two nations on this continent.

In 1930 Wilfred married Aurora Hjalmarson, a nurse who graduated from the Winnipeg General Hospital.

When worldly goods were at a minimum she performed most unselfish service, both professionally and in community work. Her father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. John T. Hjalmarson lived in Dauphin, Manitoba, for several years but now reside at Ojai in California.

Dr. and Mrs. Thorleifson have one daughter, Thelma, who is now attending Crofton House School for girls in Vancouver.

W. J. Lindal

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## Receives Promotion

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The Canadian Pacific Railway recently announced that **Walter Fridfinnson** had been promoted General Agent of its passenger department in Winnipeg, effective 1. February last,

This latest promotion follows a successful career with the railway which began in 1922. Since that time Walter has served at various places in Canada including Montreal, Saskatoon and Winnipeg.

Walter Fridfinnson, the son of the well loved composer Jón Fridfinnson and his wife Anna, was born at Baldur, Man. At the age of two, he moved with his parents to Winnipeg, where he attended the city schools, among them the Jón Bjarnason Academy. He was a fine athlete in his youth, playing lacrosse, baseball and hockey. He was a member of the famous Falcon junior team that won the Memorial Cup in 1921.

Walter is married to the former Doreen McCrae. They have two children, John Hugh and Dianne.

Walter is a member of the Masonic Order, a member of the Manitoba club and various other community organizations. Along with other members of his family, he has for many years been closely associated with the activities of the First Lutheran Church.

★

**Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson** of Winnipeg, was elected the president of the Surgical Society of Western Canada, at their annual convention in Edmonton on Feb. 22nd of this year.

## *The Riverton Community Skating Rink*

One of the many fine examples of what a small hardworking, but determined, and a united community can accomplish was witnessed at Riverton at the opening of its new community skating rink this winter. January 7th, 1950 marked the fulfilment of an "an optimist dream" said Mr. S. V. Sigurdson, Chairman, representing the Rink Committee at its opening function.

About four years ago the drive for this project was undertaken under the leadership of a few men of courage and vision. Soon every organization, business concern, and one might say every man, woman and child in the community was enlisted in the drive for funds. But it became apparent that if materials and labour was all to be paid for at current prices the cost of the undertaking would be prohibitive.

Undaunted, by such predictions, timber leases were obtained, local boys and men took out the logs, sawed them into lumber, skilled local craftsmen even undertook the difficult job of constructing the arches for the superstructure thereby saving some \$4,000 to \$5,000.

During the early summer the foundation was laid and completed by vol-

untary help under the direction and supervision of Mr. Karl Vopni. After the fall fishing season and the farmers had gathered in their harvest a building "Bee" such as few communities have ever witnessed began in earnest. All available manpower was recruited. All answered the call. The result, one of rural Manitoba's finest Community Skating Rinks, fully equipped, without indebtedness, and without added Municipal taxation.

This building, designed by Mr. S. Borgfjord of Winnipeg, is of semi-circular shape, having dimensions of 190' by 94'. The ice surface is 140 by 75'. Two dressing rooms, a waiting room and a canteen occupy a space of 90' by 18' on the ground floor. The upstairs has a recreation room 70' by 18' as well as a kitchen.

The Riverton Community is now enjoying the fruits of its labours. On almost any skating night you may see skating on the ice youngsters from three years of age and up, as well as those who are still young in spirit but have passed the allotted age of three score and ten. Our congratulations go to the Riverton Community! They have made a wise and an enduring investment which will pay rich dividends in a better youth for CANADA.

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## A Musical Family



Norman, violinist; Howard, flutist; S. W. Gudmundson, the father and Gunnar, bass viol.

Every Monday night could be called family night out for the Gudmundsons, when father and three sons take off for rehearsals with the Waukegan Philharmonic orchestra. Their total membership record with the orchestra is 18 years.

The father, Skapti W. Gudmundson, has been playing viola with the orchestra for seven years. Last year he had a perfect attendance record not missing one rehearsal. The oldest son, Norman has played violin with the

Philharmonic for five years. He was with the army for a year and spent two semesters studying music at Miami, Fla., University. When Norman was only a small tot he asked his parents for a violin for christmas. He got it, and has been studying and playing ever since. He is now a member of the Chicago Civic orchestra, a training group for potential symphony members, and is a student at Sherwood School of Music in Chicago, studying violin with Rudolph Reiners, mem-

ber of the Chicago symphony and conductor of Waukegan's orchestra.

Howard, the flutist, has been a member of the orchestra for five years. He was a winner of the student contest sponsored by the Philharmonic two years ago. Gunnar, the youngest, still in high school, is studying bass viol with Rudolph Phasbender, member of the Chicago Symphony. Last year, while attending during the summer the Stephen Foster Music Camp in Richmond, Ky., he won their music scholarship.

Waukegan is a large Chicago suburb, and the Gudmundsons live at 118 N. Jackson St. Mr. G. has for the last 27 years been employed with the Illinois Bell Telephone Co. He was brought up on a farm near Mountain, N. D., his parents were Gunnar Gud-

mundson (from Skiðastöðum in Skagafjörður, Iceland), and his wife Elin Pálmadóttir. Mrs. Gudmundson was formerly Gerda Halldorson, daughter of Thorgils and Kristin Halldorson, of Mountain. She, too, is engrossed in music. From early childhood she studied piano with local teachers, and later with Miss Hazel Sweatman in Winnipeg. "Now I mostly play for my own amusement", she says. But for the past ten years she has played the piano for the Edith Tews Dancing School in Waukegan.

The four Gudmundsons play with the Zion Symphony on occasion. Mr. Gudmundson has been doing this for 10 years. He is also a champion chess player, at which the boys are experts, as well.

H. D.

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## The Laxdæla Saga

(Continued from page 14)

all the descriptive details of the individuals that made up the band, and all their equipment, that he reports to Helgi? It seems as if the Saga-writer wished to anticipate such criticism as this, by having the lad, in a preliminary remark say that he noticed all these details, because he expected his master would enquire concerning them.

There is another and perhaps more serious difficulty about this description given by the shepherd-lad. He closes his delineation of Bolli Bollason with the words 'he seemed to me to be swollen with grief'. Now the slaying of his father had taken place more than twelve years prior, when Bolli was not as yet born. Is it likely that this warrior lad, in a posse going to avenge that slaying, would show visible tokens of grief for his father? Even though as the Saga tells, his mother Guðrún had recently been urging him and his brother to seek vengeance by showing them the blood-stained garments of their murdered father, this would not suffice to justify any such exhibition of grief as the shepherd-lad claims he saw. The expression must be viewed as an unfortunate lapse into sentimentality on the part of the Saga-writer.

### § 8

The opulence of superlatives in the epithets of the **Laxdæla** appears to be another manifestation of excess in description. The delineation of Kjartan is a good instance; by the descriptive material of the Saga-writer Kjartan is endangered as a genuine person. The writer's enthusiasm for his hero accounts for this. If, as has been held, the writer was a Christian in holy orders, we can readily understand his affection for this fickle, but fascinating

pagan who took baptism under the persuasive influence of King Ólafr Tryggvason, and later lived up to his new faith to such a degree that he chose to be slain, rather than to slay, when the final crisis came. When the Saga-man has an ill-willed and mischievous neighbor as the chief eye-witness of Kjartan's slaying, is he consciously balancing the account, by letting the enemy viewpoint of Kjartan have its innings? At all events, contemporary pagans could not well understand Kjartan's choice.

There are other traces of evidence in the **Laxdæla** indicating that the influence of the new faith was growing. The ameliorating change that comes over that old crafty pagan Snorri goði in the course of the Saga, which leads him in the later portion of the book, to counsel arbitration and peace-making in order to terminate the feuds of the leading families, must be set down to the credit of Christianity.

### § 9

The importance of women is very prominent in the **Laxdæla**. This is not to be regarded as a concession to sentiment and romantic chivalry. The author is here, as elsewhere, simply true to the life of the times. From early Viking days, as the Eddic Poetry shows, women were wont to assert themselves, more often of course indirectly through their men-folk, but also, on occasion, by direct and aggressive action. In the **Laxdæla** there are several memorable women. In the early stages of the Saga the noble Unnur the Deeply Wise organizes, in effect, the major portion of a large district in Iceland, after having, as a veritable matriarch, led a large expedition of her people from Scotland to Iceland. There are such wives as Jörunn and Vigdís (and Melkorka, though a concubine), who can

at times hold their own with their men-folk, or even dominate them. There are deserted wives, like Auðr and Þuríðr who, at the risk of their lives, seek to avenge themselves on their erring husbands by acts of violence. There is further Þorgerðr, the true daughter of that doughty battler and bard Egill Skallagrímsson, who forces her sons to avenge the slaying of their brother Kjartan. Finally, there is that complex character, Guðrún, whose intelligence and masterfulness prevail in the major portion of the Saga. As compared with her, Hrefna, the gentle wife of Kjartan, is like an unsophisticated innocent schoolgirl. Incidentally, does not the Saga-man perhaps exaggerate when he reports that Hrefna after the death of Kjartan 'burst from grief'? In any case, Hrefna seems much out of place among the women mentioned above, who all achieve a Viking stature.

### § 10

The *Laxdæla* is written throughout in the best tradition of the Saga-men. The portion dealing with the Kjartan-Guðrún tragedy shows the author at his peak form in constructive power and in narrative art. In the narrative, coming events often cast their shadows before. Thus, even in the earlier genealogical part of the *Laxdæla*, the character of Þorleifr, the father of Bolli, as being 'a man of unfairness and unpeace' and his differences with Ólafur Pá, the father of Kjartan, forecast the estrangement of Kjartan and Bolli in the Kjartan - Guðrún portion of the Saga. The fact that Ólafur Pá reared his son Bolli, with the result that he became as one of his family, served to increase the pathos of the dealings of Kjartan and Bolli later on.

Up to that estrangement, the Saga-writer has led with several inklings of

the trouble to be, subtly introduced. These may best be seen in retrospect. (1) Geirmundr, the deserting husband of Þuríður, the sister of Kjartan, curses his famous sword *Fótbít* ('Foot-Biter') when she steals it from him. Þuríðr subsequently gave the sword to her foster-brother Bolli, who later employed it in the slaying of her brother Kjartan. (2) Ólafur Pá had a dream-vision in which he was threatened with the death of his dearest son. This of course, as the Saga tells, was Kjartan. (3) Guðrún Ósvífrsdóttir had four dreams, which her friend Gestur the Wise interpreted for her. One of these foretold the death of her third husband Bolli Þorleiksson. He was slain for slaying Kjartan. (4) Lastly, Ólafur Pá told Kjartan of the uneasy premonition that he felt in regard to Kjartan's visits to converse with the widow Guðrún. It may be said that these devices are found at times in other Sagas, but this does not serve to diminish their dramatic value in the present one.

### § 11

The reader feels from the outset that, despite the glamour and greatness associated with Kjartan in the Saga, and the Saga-writer's assertion of Kjartan and Guðrún as being equally matched, the fascinating, but mercurial, man was no real match for the grim and passionate and scheming woman. Only twice does Guðrún make concessions to feeling; once when she asks Kjartan to take her with him abroad, and again, much later, when she, a venerable Christian anchorite, confesses to a favourite kinsman that she was worst to the one she had loved most.

Fate plays some part in the tragedy of their relations, but not too much may be put down to the charge of

destiny. In the character of Kjartan there was a flaw which, combined with the sequence of events, brought about the catastrophe. Kjartan possessed an amorous propensity, together with a considerable degree of fickleness. He was unwilling to marry Guðrún and to take her with him abroad. Again, when he had been detained as one of the Icelandic hostages by King Ólafr Tryggvason, he could have returned to Iceland on the same ship as Bolli, and claimed the hand of Guðrún. In that case, the tragic sequel would not have occurred.

Whether King Ólafr would have given Kjartan his sister Ingibjörg in marriage is not certain but the Saga-writer delicately touches on a love-affair between Kjartan and her which in itself may have occasioned Kjartan's delay. It is only when Kjartan reaches Iceland that he realizes what he has lost in Guðrún. She had married Bolli, despairing of Kjartan's return to her, and he, in turn, in chagrin and under the influence of his own sister, marries Hrefna the sister of his trading-partner.

### § 12

The worsening of the relations between the three principal personages — Guðrún, Kjartan and Bolli — follows a very realistic pattern. It is indeed one of the pathetic elements in the story that these persons, in so many respects preeminent and so worthwhile, should lower themselves by petty and vulgar doings against each other. Kjartan at first refuses Bolli's offer of guest-friend's gifts, and later annoys Guðrún by declaring that Hrefna, not she, shall occupy the chief place of honour at banquets as long as he lives. Miserable machinations on the part of Guðrún, using one of her brothers as a tool, results in the

theft of Kjartan's sword and Hrefna's coif. Bolli must bear the charge at Kjartan's hands for these thieveries. Kjartan's retaliation on the men at Bathstead was an act of indignity. He cooped them up for four days in their dwelling, depriving them of exit for private business. Later he, more seriously, interfered with a farm-purchase with a neighbor that the Bathstead men had arranged, but had not legally closed. The tongue of a malicious and lying gossip finally forced the smouldering fire of hostility between the families to break out into the open. The slaying of Kjartan is planned and Bolli reluctantly at the urging of his wife joins his brothers-in-law in their ambushade. Twice does this sorely tried man attempt to avoid the fatal encounter with his fosterbrother and cousin; he tries to reveal to him the ambush, and he stands aside in the fight with Kjartan until he is urged and taunted to kill Kjartan.

### § 13

After this catastrophe the *Laxdæla* becomes largely a story of revenge:— the slaying of Bolli and the slaying of his slayer Helgi Harðbeinsson more than twelve years later. Beyond that, the career of Guðrún provides the chief unifying link in the narrative. Owing to the exchange of farms between Snorri goði and Guðrún which removed him from the Eredwellers his enemies, and which separated her further from the men of Herdholt, the feuds of the families died down. Snorri goði counselled arbitration and settlement in place of further blood-feuds, and this also aided in the establishment of permanent peace.

The attempt to deprive Halldorr Ólafsson of his paternal estate at Herdholt may be regared as the last item

in the family-feuds. This attempt Halldorr shewdly parried. Such a dissolution of impending disaster without serious results provides a sort of anti-climax, and indeed a comic element,, though of a rather grim variety. Touches of comic relief are thus occasionally to be detected in the Saga. Snorri goði affords two such instances. It is grim comedy when he with Guðrún, plans that Helgi, the slayer of Bolli, shall be attacked by Lambi and Helgi's brother-in-law Þorsteinn both of whom had shared with Helgi the attack on Bolli. The other instance is more extensive and more definitely comic. Snorri plans that Þorgils Hölluson, who is eager to win Guðrún's hand in marriage, shall be duped by her, by means of a formula of double meaning, to take the lead of the posse against Helgi. Naturally, in the sequel, Þorgils suffers a comic discomfiture. When later Þorgils was paying out at Alping money as a settlement in another case, he had his head hacked off. A messenger of the matter came in hot haste to Snorri's booth and told him the tidings. Snorri's rejoinder was: "You have not understood; Þorgils Hölluson must have slain", and the messenger went on "and furthermore his head flew off its trunk." "Then it may be that it is true" remarked Snorri. He had been approached earlier by Þorgils's slayer, who had complained to Snorri of the unjust acts of Þorgils; Snorri had indirectly egged him on to revenge and had given him at parting a battle-axe.

In the Hrappr-episode, which may or may not be genuine, there is found a touch of humour, less sophisticated than Snorri's. A troublesome fellow Víga-Hrappr had uninvited, associated himself with the posse attacking Helgi Harðbeinsson. Hrappr makes much

ado about his prowess, leaps upon the summer-shed in which Helgi is pent and asks whether the fox is within. Helgi replied that he would find that the one within was rather dangerous and knew how to bite in the neighborhood of his lair, thrust his spear out through the luffer and pierced Hrappr. The leader of the posse thereupon warned his men to proceed carefully and to guard themselves against all dangers!

#### § 14

Two verses in the *Laxdæla* afford comic relief of a mild sort. One is by Hólmgöngu-Bersi. This doughty gladiator is lying bedridden in his home; he is alone there with young Halldorr Ólafsson his fosterson, Halldorr falls out of his cradle, and the helpless warrior makes a verse on their helpless plight. The sequel proves not as he forecasts. The other is a verse-fragment, attributed to Auðr when she was informed of the fact that her husband had, without good cause, announced his divorce from her at Alping. "It is well that I know of it; I was let alone". This is almost ludicrous in its inadequacy to express her feelings. As a matter of fact, Auðr later showed her real feelings when she made a night-attack on her former husband and, at the risk of her own life dealt him a serious wound.

There are three other verses in the Saga, all of little significance. One is a verse-warning from Þorgils Hölluson's guardian spirit and another from his cloak, also sounding a warning against the wiles of Snorri goði. The third and most important one is by Þorgils himself, telling Guðrún of his slaying of Helgi. The end-rhymes of this stanza may imply a late date of composition; its only valuable meta-



phor is marred by a textural flaw. In general, the verses give the impression of being later than the prose Saga itself.

### § 15

More interesting than these few stray verses is the reference to the *Húsdrápa* ('The Lay of the House') by Ulfr Uggason. This encomium in verse celebrates the building of the great hall at Herdholt, the homeplace of the family of Kjartan. Fortunately Snorri Sturluson has preserved for us several stanzas of it, descriptive of the mythological carvings on the panels of the hall. These have imbedded in them echoes of the **Head-Ransom** poem and **The Lay of Arinbjörn** by Egill Skallagrímsson. These echoes may have been inserted by Ulfr as a compliment to the housewife at Herdholt and to her father. Þorgerðr Egill's daughter was the wife of Ólafr Pá and the mother of Kjartan. The introduction of the poem began thus:

"Hoddmildum telk hildar hugreifum

Áleifi

(hann vilek at gjöf Grímniss) geð-

fjarðar lá (kveðja)"

i.e. — I set forth my song for the generous gallant warrior Ólafr; I desire to pledge him in Woden's mind-beaker (=poetry).

From the fragments of the poem we discern the following mythological pictures on the panels: (1) The Balefire of Baldur, (2) Thor Fishing up the Earth-Serpent, (3) Loki and Heimdallr at sea, fighting for the Brisíng-necklace, and (4) Thor and the Giant Garfred.

The Lay concludes with these lines: "Þar kemur á (enn æri endr bar ek mæð at hendi), (ofra ek svá) til sævar (sverðsregns rofi þagnar)"

which is an intricate way of saying that

here the river of song has reached the sea, and that the bard has delivered his poem of praise.

In the last chapter of the authentic Saga (ch. 78) there is a reference to an obituary poem of praise by another and better known bard, Arnórr, the Earls' Poet. It was composed about Gellir Þorkelsson who died ca. 1073. This, as has been pointed out earlier, is the latest time-reference in *Laxdæla* that can be verified.

### § 16

The *Laxdæla* abounds in by-names. This is not peculiar to the Saga but is found *passim* in the entire literature. The practice of applying nick-names arose from the glibbing tendency of the Icelandic mind, as well as from its close attention to descriptive details. Appropriate epithets help too to identify individuals, especially in Icelandic Sagas where many persons bearing the same name often occur.

Another element of popular origin in the *Laxdæla* consists of the many wise saws and pithy sayings that derive from the common talk of the countryside. Some of these neat turns defy adequate expression in another tongue. For those who have command of Icelandic a few instances selected at random may be added; all such acquire importance from their contexts: — "úlfr eta annars erindi", "aftans bíðr óframs sök", "hátíðar eru til heilla beztar", "er um heilt bezt at binda", "lítills er sveinn verður", "betri ein kráka í hendi enn tvær í skógi", (i.e. — a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush), "vera sökum horfinn sem hrísla eini, (i.e. to be covered with crime like a branch with juniper-berries), "at mæti dalr hóli", (i.e. a man inferior, like a dale meeting a hill), "fangs ván af frekum úlfi" (lit. expectation of a

grappling with a greedy wolf), "tekinn sem lamb ór stekk eða melrakki ór gildru", (i.e. taken like a lamb from a fold or a fox (lit. scree-hound) from a trap). Perhaps the two most striking metaphors in the Saga are expressed by Þorgils and by Guðrún. When Þorgils had been duped by Guðrún's formula of marriage-promise with its double meaning, he remarked, with a reference to Snorri goði as the source of the guile. "Gerla skil ek hvaðan alda sjá rann undir", (i.e. clearly I understand whence that wave coursed under). Guðrún's remark came when the troubles between Kjartan and the Bathstead men were coming to a crisis: "Þann seyði raufar þú þar, Kjartan, at betr væri at eigi ryki", which warns Kjartan that he is stirring up embers which it were better did not smoke.

### § 17

The Saga tradition is still strong in Iceland and the *Laxdæla* has a fascination for modern Icelandic men which exceeds that aroused by almost any other tale. Hence it has been made the theme of at least two modern Icelandic novels and also of a narrative poem of some importance. Men in Iceland still lovingly contemplate their Saga literature and maintain their interest in every detail that this historical material presents. Hence Jón Thoroddsen could in a sonnet truthfully say that in the days of his youth he experi-

enced no woe save when in Swinedale he wept 'neath the cold grey stone (where Kjartan was slain) tears of friendship for the good Kjartan. In another poem Thoroddsen presented the egging of her sons by Þorgerður in words that are as effective as the version in the *Laxdæla* itself. Again Bjarni Thorarensen without exaggeration asserted in one of his obituary poems that the maidens of Iceland still mourn for the death of the young and beautiful Kjartan, even as the isles of Greece still make lament for Achilles:

"Enn sýta Kjartan Íslands meyjar  
ungan og fagan dáinn; enn  
Akkilles gráta Grikklands eyjar - -"

Men abroad too have paid especial attention to the Kjartan —Guðrún portion of the *Laxdæla*. There is extant an old Faroese poem on this tragic tale; this is perhaps its earliest notice in literature outside of Iceland. The great Danish writer Oehlenschläger wrote a drama entitled "**Kjartan og Guðrún**". The still more famous English romanticist, William Morris, retold this northern love-story in his **Earthly Paradise** under the caption of **The Lovers of Guðrún**. A little known English poetess, Beatrice Helen Barmby (1868—1899), who wrote a drama which was entitled "**Gísli Súrson**" (published. Westminster 1900) also composed some poems on old Norse themes; one of these was entitled **Bolli and Guðrún**.

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At the fourth University Winter Fair, held February 15 and 16, at the U. of M., **Ragnar W. Gillis**, third year degree student from Morden, Man., won the grand aggregate judging award, with a first place in sheep judging and second in poultry and dairy

cattle. Mr. Gillis is the son of Ragnar and Salome Gillis of the Morden district.

William Johnson, son of John and Sigridur Johnson of Brown (Morden) won 3rd. place in judging market class beef.

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